WILL SADDAM'S ARMY FIGHT? Michae

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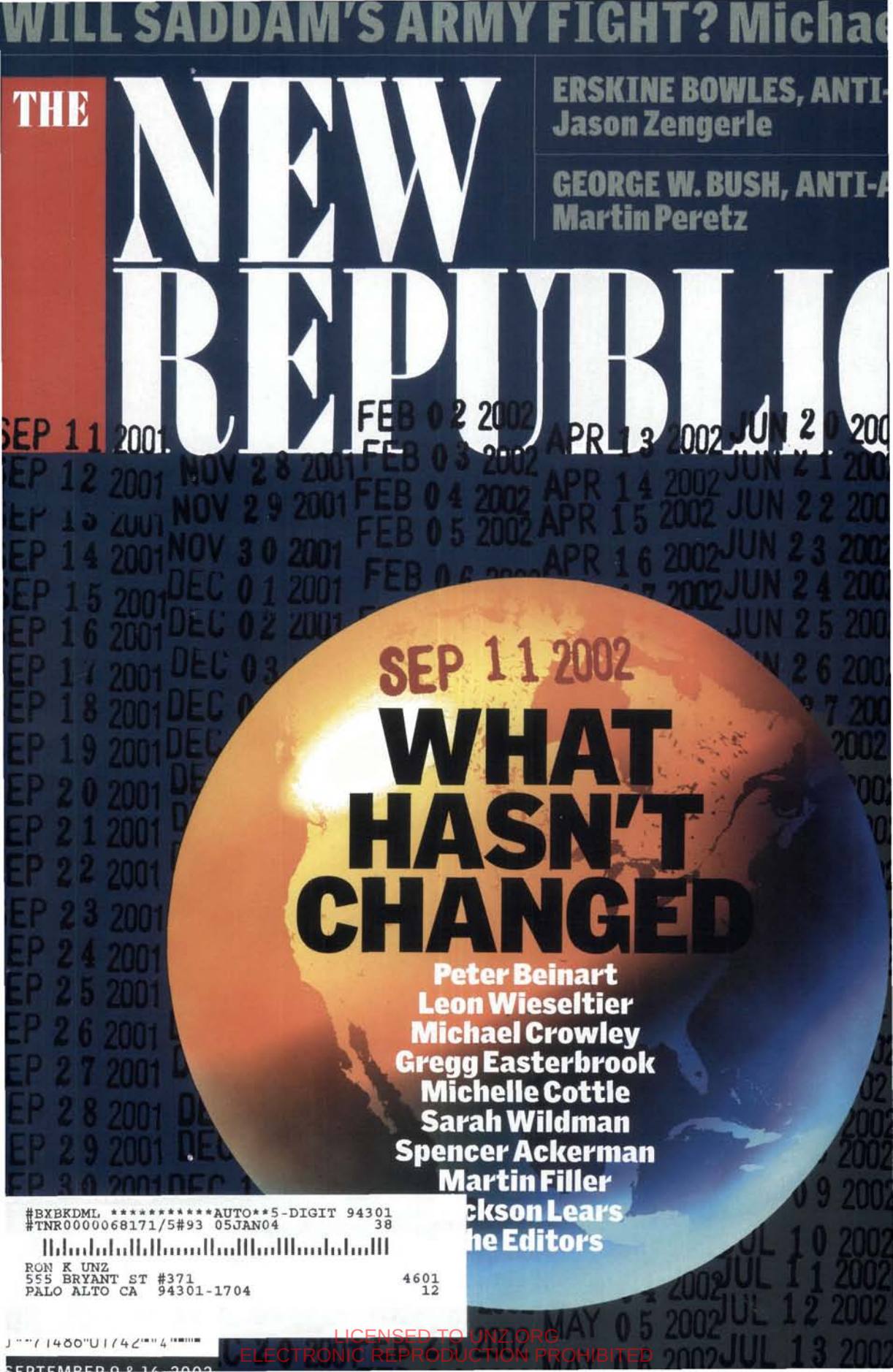

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
SEPTEMBER 9 & 16, 2002
ISSUES 4,573 & 4,574

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 227, Numbers 11 & 12, Issues 4,573 & 4,574, September 9 & 16, 2002. (Printed in the United States on August 28, 2002.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated March 4 & 11, April 1 & 8, July 8 & 15, August 5 & 12, August 19 & 26, September 9 & 16, December 2 & 9, and December 30, 2002 & January 6, 2003) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Meredith Cossa at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). **© 2002 by The New Republic, LLC.** **(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.**

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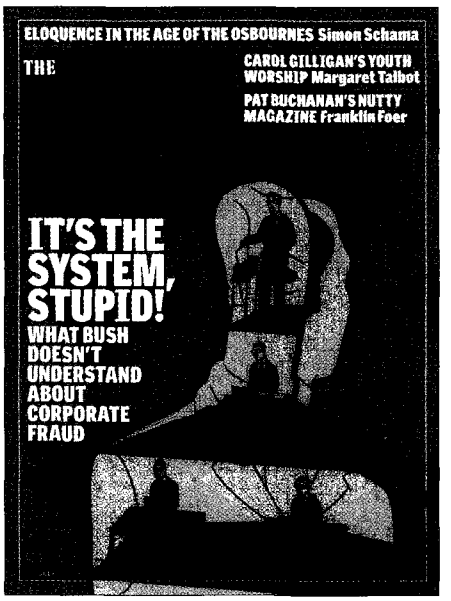
American spirit

TO THE EDITORS:

While I appreciate the gracious welcome Franklin Foer gave our as-yet-unpublished magazine, let me dissent from his conclusion that we "could not have chosen a worse time to start a journal of the isolationist right" ("Home Bound," July 22). This is precisely the right time; for there is, as Foer writes, an absolute conformity of thought at *National Review*, *The Weekly Standard*, and *Commentary*—and among the pundits who pass for conservatives at *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. They are all free-trade-and-open-borders Democrats; like you, they relish the prospect of the coming Pax Americana and "cakewalk" to Baghdad—after which we shall tutor the Muslims in democracy and go nightsticking recalcitrant regimes according to a priority list drawn up for us by Bibi Netanyahu.

Why is this the right time for our magazine? Because there is a void and a need. No one else in this city says what we say: that neoconservatism is a counterfeit. It is not conservatism at all but a hybrid of Wilsonian-FDR globalism and Rockefeller Republicanism. Free trade, interventionism, empire, eternal alliances, foreign aid, moral imperialism—these are not conservative traditions but the antithesis of those traditions. As for neocons who bray that we "won the culture war," they deceive themselves and the rest of us. And because neoconservatism has no deep roots in our history or in America's heart, the American people will repudiate it when they learn that the price is permanent war, lengthening casualty lists, ever-expanding government, and endless bailouts of bankrupt regimes in the name of Global Democracy. Do you seriously believe that conservatism is now wholly encompassed by Norman Podhoretz, Jonah Goldberg, Ramesh Ponnuru, Rich Lowry, our virtuous Teletubby William Bennett, Charles Krauthammer, and the Kristols, père et fils?

If President George W. Bush and his War Cabinet decide to go warlord-hunting and nation-building in Afghanistan and send 250,000 U.S. troops up the bloody road to Baghdad—while subcontracting Mideast policy out to Ariel Sharon—they will put the United States on the wrong side of tribalism, nationalism, and faith in a vast region of one billion people and end up in the history books alongside Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, and Dean Rusk. We intend to say so, and, if


ELOQUENCE IN THE AGE OF THE OSBOURNES Simon Schama
THE
CAROL GILLIGAN'S YOUTH WORSHIP Margaret Talbot
PAT BUCHANAN'S NUTTY MAGAZINE Franklin Foer
IT'S THE SYSTEM, STUPID!
WHAT BUSH DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT CORPORATE FRAUD

we're the only ones, fine. We believe we are right, but, then, we're all going to find out fairly soon.

PATRICK J. BUCHANAN
Co-Editor
The American Conservative
Washington, D.C.

Primary colors

TO THE EDITORS:

Respectable arguments exist on both sides of both the racial profiling and racial preference issues ("Off-Color," July 8 & 15). But that is only one reason why Peter Beinart is wrong to suggest that those who support profiling (under certain conditions) but oppose preferences are illogical, hypocritical, or care more about color blindness than about justice. Another reason is that the two policies use race in very different ways.

Assume that the profiler and the college official administering preferential admissions are both in good faith, not racists. The profiler must quickly screen a large number of potentially dangerous people without specific information about those being screened and without a practical way to improve that information in the time available for screening, while the college official wants to increase minority enrollment. To find the needle in the haystack, the profiler must use the best generalizations (stereotypes, if you prefer) she can, even as she tries to improve her information. If the generalization is accurate enough and the stakes in successful screening are high enough, society will prefer the risk of false positives (stopping innocent people) to that of false negatives (missing dangerous ones); and most mem-

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bers of the stereotyped group will agree, even though they know they are more likely to be stopped. The more inaccurate the generalization and the more intrusive the screening (arrest rather than just questioning, for example), the greater the cost to innocent people. The social balance may then shift against using that generalization, but profiling on the basis of others will continue. In contrast, preference policies use race *categorically* to allocate valuable goods from one group to another. Reasonable people differ about whether this is a just redistribution. Profiling uses it for essential screening *tentatively*—only if no better information is practically available. If the stakes and the accuracy value of profiling are high enough, no reasonable person would oppose it.

PETER H. SCHUCK
New York, New York

Power company

TO THE EDITORS:

Gregg Easterbrook takes issue with criticism that New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and others have aimed at the Bush administration's announced changes to loosen Clean Air Act limits on power plants and on other industries ("Air Condition," July 1). But his article rests on unexamined assumptions and gets too many important facts wrong. Easterbrook dismisses the law at issue as trivial, "impacting only a small percentage of total emissions." The rules the Bush administration wants to weaken require old facilities that are upgraded to either keep emissions level or to install up-to-date pollution controls. Many coal-fired power plants have ignored these limits, and that has had a dramatic effect on emissions. Just two settlements so far (with PSEG and Tampa Electric) will take thousands of tons of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides out of the air; two other companies had agreed to even greater cutbacks until the Bush administration took office. If the eight companies sued by the government settled on the same terms, sulfur dioxide could be reduced by nearly three million tons—about 20 percent of total emissions in the United States. An estimated 5,800 premature deaths per year are caused by pollution from these eight companies, according to an independent study by Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) technical consultant. No wonder Spitzer and others are so upset.

The Bush proposal, so Easterbrook says, just reduces red tape and is "unlikely" to

continued on page 45

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Aharon Barak was born in Kaunus, Lithuania, and immigrated to Israel in 1947. He was educated at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem where, after serving in the Israeli Defense Forces, he received his doctorate in law in 1963. He remained at the university, serving as a lecturer, professor and dean of the law school.

In 1978, he was appointed Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Israel and, in 1995, was named President. He has been awarded numerous honorary degrees from universities in Israel, the United States, Italy, and Great Britain. In 1999, Justice Barak was awarded the "International Justice in the World" prize, presented by the International Association of Judges.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Personal Best

AMERICANS WANT TO believe September 11 changed George W. Bush. They want to believe it because they want to believe September 11 changed them. And because the president supposedly personifies the national character, Americans project onto Bush the transformation they wish to see in themselves: He has become more serious, less self-interested; he has found his purpose. In the public narrative, September 11 has become a kind of successor to Bush's famous decision to stop drinking. He saw danger, he rose to the challenge, and he put away childish, frivolous things.

But it's not true. While no journalist can really know how September 11 altered Bush privately, the public evidence suggests that it has not fundamentally changed him as president. Most of what he has done well, and done poorly, over the last year could have been predicted before the twin towers fell. The difference is that now his strengths and his weaknesses both matter more.

Bush's great post-September 11 strength has been his highly personal, highly moralistic view of the world. And that view long predates September 11. In the 2000 election, Al Gore repeatedly tried to draw Bush into detailed discussions of policy—and thus draw a distinction between the more substantive candidate and the less substantive one. But Bush framed the race differently: as the good man versus the bad one. He began with an inherent advantage in this regard, since voters saw him as a stand-in for his father and Gore as a stand-in for Bill Clinton. And the Bush campaign's critical breakthrough was its ability, in the weeks preceding the first debate, to create a public stereotype of Gore as dishonest and thus link him back to Clinton. Similarly, Bush's standard stump speech culminated not with a reference to policy or to his accomplishments as governor but with an allusion to his character as a man. "When I put my hand on the Bible," Bush said again and again to thunderous applause, "I will swear not only to uphold the laws of this land, . . . I will also swear to uphold the honor and the integrity of the office to which I have been elected, so help me God."

In his first eight months as president, Bush followed the same script. He endlessly described political appointees and allies as "good men." And as if to make clear that goodness was a personal rather than an ideological category, he even bestowed the moniker on arch-liberal Ted Kennedy. Early in Bush's first year, the Marc Rich pardon scandal kept Clinton alive as the "bad man" against which Bush was favorably compared. And after Tom Daschle became Senate majority leader, Bush condoned a highly personal effort to anoint him as Clinton and Gore's successor in the "bad man" role. Bush's foreign policy was just as personal. After meeting Vladimir Putin, then widely considered an anti-American autocrat, Bush stunned conservatives by announcing, "I looked the man in the eye—I was able to get a sense of his soul."

In many ways, this outlook was just what the United States needed in the immediate aftermath of September 11. While the press searched for structural explanations for the horror, Bush brushed off the left's agonized debate about "why they hate us" with superficial references to American decency, and he brushed off the right's angry debate about the growing malevolence of contemporary Islam with superficial assurances that Islam is a religion of peace. Instead, Bush focused on Osama bin Laden himself, the "evil man" behind the attacks. And after it became clear he was dwelling too much on one individual—and thus setting up a false measure of the war on terrorism's success—he simply broadened the enemy to "the evildoers" who brought down the twin towers. Bush seemed to understand instinctively that a debate about the attack's systemic roots could undermine the moral clarity the United States needed in a time of war. After an attack on U.S. soil that could have profoundly shaken national self-confidence, the United States was well-served by a president who didn't see good and evil as complicated categories. And George W. Bush never had.

The problems with Bush's outlook are taking longer to manifest themselves. In formal addresses written by his intellectually minded speechwriting shop, Bush has defined the war on terrorism as the successor to America's struggles against twentieth-century totalitarianism. But when he speaks off-the-cuff, without handlers, Bush falls back on his more personal understanding of good versus evil. And he doesn't explain what principle, if any, distinguishes the two. So last week, when asked about Pervez Musharraf's gutting of the Pakistani constitution, Bush replied, "My reaction about President Musharraf, he's still tight with us on the war against terror, and that's what I appreciate. . . . Obviously, to the extent our friends promote democracy, it's important." The implication was clear. Musharraf—whom Bush has spent a great deal of time personally wooing—is a friend, a "good man." And as with Ted Kennedy, that friendship transcends differences of principle.

Similarly, in a telephone call this week with Crown Prince Abdullah, Bush reportedly referred to "the eternal friendship" between the United States and Saudi Arabia. Many experts think the Saudi monarchy has in recent years undergone an important ideological shift toward a foreign policy basically hostile to the United States. But Bush seems to consider the divergence little more than a tiff between pals that can be patched up by some quality time at his Crawford ranch.

Bush never addresses the moral hypocrisy underlying America's demand for democracy in Palestine and Iraq and our unwillingness to nudge the Saudis toward even minimal freedoms. Yet that hypocrisy is undermining the war on terrorism and the likely campaign against Iraq. The liberal secularists in the Muslim world who hate bin Laden and Saddam likely also hate Crown Prince Abdullah and increasingly hate Musharraf—and for many of the same good reasons. And we will never convince them to back our campaign against the dictator in Iraq if we simultaneously coddle the dictators in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Bush's great success over the last year has been to invest the war on terrorism with the moral clarity the United States needs as it enters a dangerous new era. His great weakness is his tendency to see that moral clarity in personal rather than philosophical terms, to view as self-evident principles that for others are becoming increasingly less so. If left unaddressed, that weakness will ultimately pervert the moral vision upon which the war on terrorism is based, sowing confusion and cynicism about what, exactly, the United States is fighting for. George W. Bush has done a lot of good by conducting the war on terrorism the same way he has conducted most other things since he entered national politics roughly three years ago. Now he needs to change.

PETER BEINART

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The Same and Different

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, how could America not change? And how, after September 11, 2001, could America change? Staying the same and not staying the same are both forms of resistance, of retaliation. The enemy wished to destroy what we were, so let us be exactly what we were; but we were too frivolous and too complacent, and so we cannot be exactly what we were. And yet American frivolity is one of the world's joys, the expression of an unprecedented civilizational happiness. But then we are also at war, and we must remember that our happiness is not a miracle but an enterprise, the creation of values and institutions that must be protected. After what happened in lower Manhattan, then, it is stupid to watch "Sex and the City" and it is stupid not to watch "Sex and the City." Mourning must end, but the end of mourning must not be confused with the end of seriousness. Identity in the wake of catastrophe is always a spiritual mess, a vexing tangle of continuities and discontinuities.

A question should be asked in a way that permits an answer. The question of whether the United States has changed as a result of the slaughter near Liberty Plaza must be formulated more usefully. Changed, with respect to what? The aspect of American life that most urgently demanded to be revised after September 11 was, obviously, the aspect of American security. The ease with which Mohammed Atta and his lethal band planned and executed their attacks remains a scandal. Their freedom of action was not a price of our freedom, it was an abuse of our freedom; and you do not have to be John Ashcroft to think so. (Indeed, it is Ashcroft and his ilk who are impervious to transformation, who find in the crisis only an opportunity to make their ideology into policy.) The quality of the thinking at American airports is a much more pressing matter than the quality of the thinking at American movie studios. Terrorists cannot be allowed to hide behind the American passion for immigrants. And governments, even "friendly" governments, that deal with the inflammations of their own societies by exporting them to Western societies must begin to feel the ire of American foreign policy. Alas, at the Immigration and Naturalization Service, at the Department of Transportation, at the Department of State, and elsewhere, the post-September definitions of American safety do not appear to have altered many assumptions and many practices.

In American politics, the continuities since September 11 have been troubling to some, especially to the president. The refusal of the Democrats to go along with every proposal of the administration has been construed as "partisanship" or worse. It is certainly the case that sometimes the Democrats have disguised political self-interest behind their moral and constitutional responsibility to make their objections known; but it is no less the case that their moral and constitutional responsibility is real. And the White House has not exactly been overwhelmed by a spirit of historical largeness. The sense of destiny that characterized George W. Bush in the weeks and the months after the attacks, that lifted him unexpectedly above his own sorry limitations, was long ago dissipated by business as usual. He liberated Afghanistan and went back to fund-raising. The hollowness of the president, the poverty of his resources for leadership, is plain, and it is "partisanship" to find anything Churchillian in the man. If anything has been continuous in the United States before and after Al Qaeda struck, it has been the mediocrity of our politics.

We are at war with terrorism, and we may soon be at war with Iraq. Will American culture interfere with American purpose? Can we keep our heads amid the mindlessness of American entertainment? For we are being tested in what is not exactly the most intelligent period in our history. It helps, no doubt, that the fevers of "new economy" capitalism have subsided, though the financial havoc that this "correction" has wreaked upon many Americans is a high price to pay for a restoration of sobriety. But more generally it is unrealistic to expect the atrocity of September 11 to transform America into Sparta. Anyway, our calling is not to be Sparta. It is to demonstrate to the world that a more or less happy society can fight for itself, for its people and its principles. To defend ourselves even as we delight ourselves: those are our duties. We should change, or not change, as those duties, and our better selves, demand. ■

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NOTEBOOK

GENERAL CONFUSION: Ever wonder what happened to Anthony Zinni? A retired Marine Corps general and a close ally of Colin Powell, Zinni became George W. Bush's special envoy to the Middle East last year. But after several unsuccessful missions to the region, he seemed to disappear from the diplomatic scene, his Mideast portfolio handed off to others such as CIA Director George Tenet and Assistant Secretary of State William J. Burns. But if Zinni hasn't made much news lately, it's only because no one has been paying him much attention. Even as the media has focused on opposition to the administration's Iraq policy from anonymous State Department staffers and the equivocal editorializing of Bush père-era wise men, Zinni, who serves at the pleasure of the president, has taken his complaints public. In an undernoticed appearance before the Economic Club of Florida on August 23, Zinni charged that administration policy was flawed in part because it was being driven by civilians. "If you ask me my opinion, General Scowcroft, General Powell, General Schwarzkopf, General Zinni—we all see this the same way," Zinni declared, according to *The Tallahassee Democrat*. "It might be interesting to note that all the generals see this the same way, and all those that never fired a shot in anger are really hell-bent to go to war." Moreover, unlike James Baker and other cautious critics, Zinni doesn't just believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be defused before the United States can take action against Saddam Hussein. He wants the balance of the world's most intractable problems solved first. "What are your priorities in the region? That's the first thing. The Middle East peace process, to my mind, has to be a higher priority. Winning the war on terrorism has to be a higher priority," he said. "More directly, the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia, needs to be resolved—making sure [Al Qaeda] can't rise again from the ashes, that the Taliban can't come back, that the warlords can't claim power over Kabul and [Afghan President Hamid] Karzai and destroy everything that's happened so far." Don't get us wrong. We're all for Zinni's right to publicly slam the Bush administration's apparent policy toward Iraq. But shouldn't he at least leave Bush administration first?

THE NEW, NEW MATH: Last year, when lobbying for a giant tax cut, the Bush administration walked a delicate tightrope: warn the public that the economy was heading into a recession (in order to prepare them for the inevitable and to blame it on the preceding administration) but assure them that, whatever happened, giant surpluses would never, ever diminish (in order to persuade them that there would be plenty of money for a back-loaded tax cut). Economy bad, budget good. Now that it's been more than one year since the tax cut, the administration needs to start taking credit for the inevitable recovery while still explaining away the budget deficit, dramatized most recently in the latest CBO budget forecast. Hence the evolution of a new line: economy good, budget bad. "The recession has caused revenues to fall short of their targets," asserted White House spokesman Ari Fleischer. But doesn't the CBO finger the tax cut as a major cause of long-term deficits? "No," Fleischer insisted, "the president views tax cuts as one of the reasons the economy is coming back." But if the economy's coming back, why do we still have projections of long-term deficits? Oh, yes—the recession.

ALL IN THE FAMILY: It's no secret that the biggest beneficiaries of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's land-redistribution policy—under which white farmers have been forced to turn over their property to the government for supposed redistribution to the country's poor, landless blacks—have, in fact, been Mugabe's rich cronies. As *The Washington Times* reported last week, at least 70 percent of the land Mugabe's government has seized has gone to "senior politicians, businessmen, and members of the armed forces close to Mr. Mugabe." But it's not just Mugabe's cronies who are enjoying the ill-gotten gains: The *Times* reports that Mugabe's family is benefiting, too. Two of Mugabe's sisters, his brother-in-law, and one of his wife's nephews have all been given farms. And last week Mugabe's wife, Grace, reportedly showed up—with army officers and thugs in tow—at the white-owned 3,000-acre Iron Mask farm north of Harare. "I'm taking over this farm," she declared, according to the *Times*' account, before having the farm's 78-year-old owner John Matthews and his wife Eva evicted. In a subsequent interview with London's *Daily Mail*, the Matthewses speculated that Mugabe's wife intended to give the farm—which has two swimming pools and a 29-room mansion—to family members. So, in another triumph of African socialism, it's being redistributed again.

DO AS I SAY: "Mr. Bush, we're asking for your support, to be the president that looks towards the future."—Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, urging President Bush to attend the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, at an August 12 rally

"International stars of film and music have failed to put in expected appearances at the beginning of the [Summit]. Leonardo DiCaprio ... was due to support a project to save great apes, but has pulled out because of 'contractual obligations' in the United States."—BBC News online, August 28

HOME NEWS: We are happy to announce the publication of *The Emerging Democratic Majority* by TNR Senior Editor John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation. Judis and Teixeira argue that the Democrats, once the party of Archie Bunker and the Rust Belt, have responded better than the GOP to the demographic and technological changes of the past two decades and are well on their way to becoming the dominant party of a new postindustrial America. We are proud that many of the book's arguments first appeared in these pages, and we encourage readers to peruse them in their final form. ■

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Our newfound foxhole religion fades.

Prayer Circle

By MICHELLE COTTLE

DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR THE PAST couple of years the nine a.m. Sung Eucharist has been the most popular of the three Sunday Masses at St. Paul's Episcopal on K Street, with around 130 of the church's 675 members in attendance on your average Sunday. The service has more candles, music, and ceremonial pomp—"smells and bells," as the Reverend Edwin Barnett calls it—than the 7:45 a.m. Low Mass. And for the many families with children, it is more convenient than the midday Mass. On this late August morning, however, only 85 or so congregants are scattered throughout the nave, with most of the smooth wooden pews supporting a mere two or three backsides. As with many houses of worship in D.C., things are slow at St. Paul's in the summer: College students have gone home for the break, Congress is out of session, and families are away on holiday. So for a lazy, off-season Sunday in the nation's capital, today's sparse turnout is pretty standard.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

But the very ordinariness of August at St. Paul's seems extraordinary when you recall that just nine months ago there was broad talk of a nationwide religious revival. Americans' rush to find solace in religion, in fact, was among the first trends noted by the media during those early, tender days just after September 11. News outlets both staid (*The New York Times*) and silly (*People Magazine*) marveled at the crowds filling houses of worship from Washington to California, from Minnesota to Texas. On September 23, more than 20,000 mourners came together for the ecumenical prayer service at Yankee Stadium.

Pollsters swiftly took to the phones to document the phenomenon. A CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup survey, conducted just three days after the horror, reported that 74 percent of adults were praying or intended to pray more than usual as a result of the attacks. A Pew poll conducted around the same time put the number at 69 percent. Two months later, echoing many religious leaders, Pat Robertson told CNN's Paula Zahn, "[W]hat we're seeing is that this awful attack, as horrific as it was and as heartrending, is bringing about one of the greatest spiritual revivals in the history of America. People are turning to God. The churches are full."

But even as Robertson was making his declaration, the signs of revival were receding. As attendance at religious services began falling toward pre-tragedy levels (a trend that reportedly cut across most faiths), it increasingly looked as though we hadn't been transformed after all. A November 26 report by the Barna Research Group, a Christian polling firm based in Southern California, indicated just how dramatically our theological outlook had not changed. In a November survey examining "21 indicators of the nation's spiritual climate," Barna found no significant difference between pre- and post-attack levels of church attendance, Bible reading, and prayer, as well as the number of people who "strongly agree[d]" that religious faith was very important in their lives.

Although many religious leaders sound vaguely disappointed that a permanent spiritual metamorphosis did not occur, some admit that they always assumed people's behavior would return to pre-attack norms. In the weeks immediately following the tragedy, St. Paul's nine o'clock services swelled to upward of 200 people. "But I don't think anyone would surely expect those sudden elevated numbers to stay that way," says Barnett. "Those numbers were an indication of a perturbation to a system. Anytime there's a perturbation to any kind of system there's a ripple effect that goes out, and those waves will gradually decay with distance and time." Indeed, a report issued in December by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life noted that similar increases in prayer and religious attendance occurred after President Ronald Reagan was shot and during the Gulf war—and proved to be just as ephemeral. "It's what a lot of people call 'foxhole religion,'" agrees the Reverend Frank Wade, rector of St. Alban's Episcopal in Northwest Washington. "If something happens ... and your world is shaking, you reach for something that is not supposed to shake." But he adds, "You can't sustain that. You can't stay that much on edge. People just don't live that way."

This is not to say the attacks didn't prompt a kind of soul-searching that may have lingering effects. Many religious leaders say they have noticed a subtler shift in some of their congregants' priorities. "I think people had to come to terms with their own mortality," says David Owens, pastor of Christ Church of Washington. And this confrontation with the uncertainty and fragility of life, posit spiritual leaders, has prompted people to seriously examine not just what matters most to them now (a new emphasis on family is often mentioned) but also the state of their eternal soul. Even so, talk of a massive, enduring overhaul of our relationship with God has all but vanished. Though many Washington-area houses of worship will hold memorial services to mark the anniversary of the attacks, religious leaders say they expect only slightly above-average attendance.

For better or worse, it seems that not even September 11 could upset the national "religious equilibrium" that Robert Wuthnow, director of Princeton's Center for the Study of Religion, laid out for *The New York Times* last November: one-quarter of the population devout, one-quarter secular, one-half mildly interested. As the Reverend Barnett notes, when crisis strikes, people always start out with the overwhelming sense that "nothing will ever be the same again." But now, just a few weeks before the first anniversary of the worst terrorist attack in American history, St. Paul's uncrowded pews suggest that some things are the same already. ■

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Remember Afghanistan?

Drop Zone

By SPENCER ACKERMAN

AT 10:15 A.M. on April 17, President George W. Bush demonstrated just how much his foreign policy outlook has matured since September 11. Honoring the winners of the Virginia Military Institute's (VMI) George C. Marshall ROTC Award, Bush summoned the spirit of the architect of U.S. postwar nation-building to signal his newfound appreciation for such tasks. Where during the campaign Bush had dismissed nation-building as glorified social work, at VMI he outlined an expansive vision of America's continuing commitment to post-Taliban Afghanistan. "[T]rue peace will only be achieved when we give the Afghan people the means to achieve their own aspirations," he declared, paying tribute to "the success of Marshall's vision" as he suggested that a new Marshall Plan was in order for Central Asia. It was a stirring moment, an impressive change of heart and mind. And its message did not even endure until lunchtime.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

At 11:30 that morning Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld began his daily press briefing at the Pentagon and quickly found himself fielding questions about the U.S. military's role in the international peacekeeping operations meant to pacify warlord-riven Afghanistan. "Ah, peacekeeping," he sighed. In a classically Rumsfeldian exchange, the exasperated defense secretary insisted that America's primary role was to pursue remaining pockets of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. That focus, he cautioned, did not signal Pentagon opposition to expanding the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which oversees Afghan peacekeeping: Coalition allies were free to do so; unfortunately none were stepping forward with troops or money. One frustrated reporter finally interjected, "Sir, you are against U.S. troops as peacekeepers in Afghanistan." Rumsfeld dodged the accusation. "I said four times that's a presidential decision, and if I'm going to give advice, I will give it to the president," he insisted, before wryly adding, "Although I think you've got a hint." The press corps broke out in laughter.

When it comes to nation-building, the 185 miles between VMI and the Pentagon symbolize the distance between the administration's rhetoric and its policies. The president talks a better game on nation-building than he did before Al Qaeda struck. But as disorder increases in Afghanistan and the U.S.-led coalition drags its feet on reconstruction, observers inside and outside of Kabul are becoming more and more cynical. Increasingly, it looks like the Bush administration hasn't learned much of anything about nation-building in the year since September 11.

To be fair, the United States is putting money into Afghanistan's post-Taliban reconstruction. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) estimates that America spent $505 million on assistance to the Afghan people in fiscal year 2002, with $275 million of that going through USAID and its partner agencies. Yet the biggest disbursements have been for humanitarian aid such as food, medicine, potable water, shelter, and refugee care and support. U.S. redevelopment aid—money for longer-term projects to rebuild Afghanistan's economy and society—has been far less generous. For instance, Afghanistan needs significant agricultural assistance so it can grow crops other than poppies for the heroin market, but the United States has spent at most $12 million on vital agricultural improvements, like the rehabilitation of wells and seed multiplication. Then there's the country's water crisis: Afghanistan has endured a devastating three-year drought and desperately needs an irrigation system; but the USAID money devoted to water projects in Afghanistan is minuscule. Also domestic politics has interfered: Bush recently announced that he will not spend $5.1 billion of an emergency appropriation, shooting down several million dollars in supplementary aid to Afghanistan. And that's not all the United States has failed to help with. As one American consultant working in Kabul puts it, "Basic reconstruction tasks have not begun, like repair of the major highways, and no one can provide an acceptable explanation."

One explanation is that in most of Afghanistan it is too dangerous to pursue development projects. To take only the most recent examples: Three gunmen forced their way into an office of the U.N. high commissioner for refugees on August 13 in the southeastern province of Ghazni, locked the staff in the bathroom, and stole cash and communications equipment. Near the Pakistan border the warlord Padshah Khan is openly defying the Hamid Karzai government's order to lay down his arms, and he has reportedly blocked the road from Gardez to Khost. Even on the outskirts of ISAF-secured Kabul, a group of twelve escaped Al Qaeda suspects stormed a military post on August 7, killing three Afghan soldiers.

Such security threats are crippling redevelopment efforts in large part because the Karzai government cannot project power outside the nominal capital. "The actuality is that Karzai is the mayor of Kabul," says Robert Perito, a senior fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace. Turkey currently leads the 5,000-strong ISAF, but the force hasn't pushed beyond the city limits. And it won't unless the United States participates directly or exerts pressure on it—because as Perito observes, only America can call in air strikes against the regional warlords who would likely challenge ISAF's expansion. The Bush administration says it is contributing to peacekeeping efforts by helping train a new Afghan army. But without credible power projection beyond Kabul, that army—which has graduated only about 350 recruits so far—will be merely one among several armed factions loyal to various warlords. "You can't build a new army without demobilization," says Ahmed Rashid, author of *Taliban: Militant*

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Mexican Gridlock

Stephen Haber is the Peter and Helen Bing Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of political science and history at Stanford University.

The electoral victory of Vicente Fox in July 2000 ended the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) seven-decade monopoly of power. Fox promised dramatic increases in educational spending, tax reform, an end to government corruption and the Chiapas rebellion, an immigration agreement with the United States, and economic growth of 7 percent a year. Two years into the Fox presidency, virtually all those promises remain unfulfilled.

Fox's inability to make good on his campaign promises has not been for lack of trying. Rather, his reforms have either been scuttled or made toothless in Congress. Fox's sweeping tax reform was turned into a surtax on restaurant meals and hotel charges. His indigenous rights bill was so watered down that the Chiapas rebels rejected it. Congress even rejected Fox's request to travel to the United States in the fall of 2001, an act designed to embarrass him. Fox's only legislative victory was the passage of a Freedom of Information Act that opens up the files of Mexico's government to the citizenry.

Fox's legislative failures have surprised the Mexican public. From 1929 until 1997, when the PRI controlled the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies (Mexico's lower house), and the presidency, Congress simply rubber-stamped presidential proposals.

Now Mexico has three major parties: the conservative National Action Party (PAN); the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD); and the ideologically amorphous PRI. No party has a majority in either house of Congress. Given the differences and long-term strategies of each party, it is virtually impossible to form coalitions. The PRI wants to recapture the presidency in 2006 and thus refuses to form a coalition with the PAN (Fox's party). The PRD—ideologically opposed to the PAN—also refuses to form a coalition. Although the PRI and the PRD can form coalitions, their purpose is to block everything that Fox proposes.

This situation is unlikely to change. The two fundamental problems are that, first, Mexico's electoral laws specify that two-thirds of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies represent winner-take-all districts (the candidate with the most votes in the district wins the seat). The seats in the other third are allocated by proportional representation (parties are allocated seats based on their percentage of the total vote). In this system, voters do not "waste" votes by voting for third-party candidates: parties win seats via the proportional voting rules even if they lose in every individual district. Mexico is therefore unlikely to converge on a two-party system. Second, Mexico's electoral laws specify that senators and deputies may not run for immediate reelection, pegging their future not to their performance as representatives but to their performance as loyal members of their party (which determines whether they can be placed on the list of candidates for a proportional seat).

Thus even with congressional elections next year, it is unlikely that Fox will be able to form effective coalitions; it is therefore unlikely that he will have any more success in the next four years than he has had in the last two.

— Stephen Haber

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. "Building a new army in itself is not good enough."

In fact, far from representing an ideological shift, Bush's Afghanistan policy represents a clear extension of his stance on intervention in Kosovo. When the United States committed militarily in 1999, the then-Texas governor supported the mission. But once the Serbs withdrew, Bush derided the idea of using American troops to help reconstruct the region. Before the 2000 elections the Bush campaign's foreign policy team—now-national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and now-Trade Representative Robert Zoellick—argued in *Foreign Affairs* that military power should be used only to protect clearly defined American interests. And since taking office the administration has tried to do just that. In June, for instance, it announced it would shutter the Army Peacekeeping Institute (PKI), a creation of the Clinton administration at the Army War College. PKI is the military's central authority for planning peacekeeping strategies, holding among other conferences an annual summer seminar with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Despite its annual budget of only $200,000, Perito argues that PKI "is very important if we believe in conducting operations in post-conflict environments." According to the Bush administration's plan, PKI should close down for good by the second anniversary of September 11.

All of which raises two serious problems regarding America's likely attack on Iraq. First, the Bush administration's weak record on sticking around once the fighting is done may be inhibiting allies from signing onto the effort. Second, if the United States takes on Saddam Hussein, the administration's appetite for nation-building in Afghanistan could decline even further, placing that country's reconstruction in even graver jeopardy. "I'm frankly extremely fearful Afghanistan will become a sideshow," says Rashid. "'Nation-building is simply the consolidation of the initial military victory," says the consultant in Kabul, "and without it, the victory will turn to dust, like most other projects here."

Marshall's success in Europe, Bush said at VMI, serves as "a beacon to light the path that we, too, must follow." If only he were following it with more than just words. ■

Tuning out the world.

News Break

By SARAH WILDMAN

THE SUMMER OF 2002 didn't feel all that different from the summer of 2001. Last summer we worried about shark attacks; this summer we wrung our hands over kidnappings. In 2001 the media waited outside Gary Condit's Adams Morgan apartment; in 2002 it camped out in a Los Angeles hospital waiting room to see if conjoined twins from Guatemala would be successfully separated.

The difference is that this year these weren't the things we were supposed to be focusing on. In the first blurry weeks following September 11, Americans seemed hungry to learn about events beyond our shores. "ONCE-INSULAR AMERICANS STUDYING UP ON THE WORLD," announced the *Los Angeles Times* in October. Polls showed unprecedented levels of international-news consumption. Bookstores reported that they couldn't keep books on Islam, the Middle East, and Afghanistan in stock. Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban* was published in 2000 with a print run of 8,000 copies; by the end of October 2001, Yale University Press had printed 245,000 more to meet a sudden, urgent demand. From September 11 through October, according to the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, an impressive 78 percent of Americans followed news of the attacks closely. Students, a Boston-area professor told *The Boston Globe*, were playing catch-up, "trying to learn history as fast as they can," anxious to learn about "refugees, Islam, fundamentalist beliefs and how they feed into political movements, and of course, terrorism." Their parents were no different, filling churches, town halls, and mosques from Boston to Seattle to learn more about Islam and the Middle East. "Booksellers and librarians report throngs of patrons hungry for an in-depth understanding of places, politics and theologies to which they paid scant attention before September 11," marveled *The Oregonian* one month after the attacks. *The Dallas Morning News* found Texas radio stations and churches leading classes on Islam. The United States had seen a steady decline in hard-news consumption generally, and international news specifically, throughout the 1990s; but the extraordinary level of interest led experts to hypothesize that a radical shift was in the works.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

But it quickly became clear that any shift had been temporary. In May, eight months after the attacks, the Pew Research Center began releasing new data on news consumption. In a paper titled "A More Attentive Union? News Interest and Civic Learning in the wake of September 11th," Peyton Craighill and Michael Dimock wrote, "Unlike many of the disasters the Center has tracked, the terrorist attacks were thought by many to have the potential to fundamentally change the relationship Americans have with the news." But, though the Center found—in a dozen national opinion surveys—interest in terrorism had been largely sustained, that had "not necessarily translated into broader public interest in news about local, national, or international events." And campus teach-ins notwithstanding, there was "no evidence that 9/11 sparked a surge in youth engagement in the news." (Indeed, at the end of September, hoping to help freshmen cope with the aftermath, a series of seminars was introduced by UCLA, each related to the events of September 11; this fall the seminars are offered again, but this time students can choose to avoid terrorism and take classes like "Staging Race in the American Musical" or "The Hobbit: Tolkien's View of Good & Evil in the Community.") At the May meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research,

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International Education: The Best Defense Against Terrorism

Kurt M. Landgraf, President & CEO of Educational Testing Service

President George W. Bush recently outlined a new U.S. foreign policy in which America will be more assertive in combating terrorism by striking our enemies first. The commencement speech at West Point made headlines around the world, and commentators are still writing and talking about it, and understandably so.

Something else in the President's address received little notice, nor has it prompted much in the way of additional conversation. While not nearly as momentous as the "first strike" doctrine, it was an important passage nevertheless. In his speech President Bush said, *"In our development aid, in our diplomatic educational assistance, the United States will promote moderation and tolerance and human rights."*

ETS fully supports this renewed American commitment to international education. We provide assessments of all kinds in over 180 countries and our various tests are used by thousands of U.S. colleges and universities as they seek to enroll students from abroad.

Support for enlightened international engagement is echoed among American voters. Recently we asked Opinion Dynamics, a non-partisan public opinion research firm, to gauge public sentiment on this topic. The results were encouraging:

- 52% believe that President Bush's proposal for educational assistance to other countries is important in the fight against terrorism and to promote moderation, tolerance, and human rights.
- By nearly two to one, Americans oppose suggestions that we cut back on the number of foreign students allowed to study in the U.S.
- Nearly 9 in 10 agree that American students need to increase their awareness of world affairs, including foreign language, geography, culture, and politics.

"In our development aid, in our diplomatic educational assistance, the United States will promote moderation and tolerance and human rights."

— President George W. Bush

If America is to realize its dream of greater cooperation among nations, we must strengthen international education and exchange programs, and support U.S. diplomatic efforts, including more funds for overseas student advising centers. These centers are on the front line of the battle for mutual understanding.

We recently contributed $750,000 to the U.S. State Department to establish "ETS Advising for the Future" grants that will be distributed throughout their Educational and Cultural Affairs centers worldwide. The money will be used to help them meet the challenges they face daily as America's advocates for both U.S. education and international students. We urge other organizations and America's higher education community to provide similar support.

Americans of virtually all political persuasions support the war against terrorism. There is little prospect that our commitment to the fight will wane over time. It is equally true that Americans see that in the struggle against terror, we must also arm the people of the world with the knowledge and understanding that only comes through education.

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where Craighill and Dimock presented their paper, pollsters talked mostly about how *little* public attitudes had changed.

More specifically, Americans' interest in foreign affairs is as low as ever. In June, Pew released a study of 3,002 Americans that showed only 6 percent had noticed the coup in Venezuela or the rise of right-wing French presidential candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen. Only 5 percent had paid attention to the economic and political upheaval in Argentina. Even the nuclear tension between India and Pakistan drew only 23 percent. And 49 percent said they occasionally follow international news—the same percentage documented in 2000. "Reported levels of reading, watching and listening to the news are not markedly different than in the spring of 2000," the report found. "At best, a slightly larger percentage of the public is expressing general interest in international and national news, but there is no evidence its appetite for international news extends much beyond terrorism and the Middle East." Any increased interest in international news came from "a narrow, highly-educated segment of the public [consisting of] affluent Americans, college graduates and older people." In fact, 61 percent of Americans admitted to tuning *out* foreign news unless a "major development" occurs. And even among the group Pew calls the "core international news audience"—16 percent of Americans, who are mostly white men over age 50 with college degrees—interest in issues unrelated to terrorism was relatively low; only one-quarter of this group followed Le Pen's candidacy, for example.

One thing that hasn't changed, however, is Americans' belief that they *should* care about the rest of the world. "People understand the value, the need to pay more attention to politics, to government, to foreign affairs," says Scott Keeter, associate director at the Pew Research Center. "But what's less clear is that even though people continue to say it's important, they are not actually doing it. ... It's harder to change actual behavior than attitude." Do we get credit for trying? ■

How to fund a terrorist.

Oil Price

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

REMEMBER IN THE winter of 2001, just after George W. Bush took office, when the United States was said to face an energy crisis? Remember the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, when it dawned on us that Osama bin Laden is a Saudi and that most of the hijackers were Saudis, and yet the United States buys nearly one-quarter of its imported petroleum from the Persian Gulf—transferring at least $20 billion annually to the Saudi princes who encourage Islamic fanaticism? Remember when President Bush declared Iraq an "evil" state, and commentators noted that the United States buys $10 billion in crude oil from Saddam Hussein annually, subsidizing his weapons programs, sybaritic lifestyle, and repression of 20 million Iraqis? Remember when you read that U.S. domestic petroleum production continues to decline, meaning that unless something changes this country will grow ever-more dependent on Saudi and Iraqi oil? Remember when you read that SUVs are excused from the fuel-efficiency standards that apply to regular cars and that this special favor to wastefulness explains why U.S. petroleum consumption, crude-oil imports from the Gulf, and greenhouse gas emissions are all trending in the wrong direction?

In the aftermath of September 11, here is what has been done about these issues: Nothing.

Since the attacks the United States has taken no action on any front regarding petroleum policy. Oil imports from Saudi Arabia continue unabated, with close to one-third of Saudi government revenues—meaning a large share of the financing of anti-American Saudi clerics and of anti-American, Saudi-backed *madrassas* across the world—funded by American oil revenues. Individual petroleum firms have backed off somewhat on purchasing from Iraq, but only, as *The Washington Post* reported this week, because Saddam's corrupt brokers demand excessive kickbacks, not as a result of any new government policy. SUVs retain their special low-mileage standards. Domestic crude-oil production keeps declining, and exploratory drilling remains banned in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)—the best hope to find an "elephant," or major new oil field, in the United States. Greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise—up 14 percent in the last decade—with virtually all the increase coming from SUVs and residential energy use, not industry. The only energy-policy advance in the past year is congressional approval to open the Yucca Mountain atomic-waste storage facility, which ensures that atomic power plants will continue operating. But no one claims that the Yucca Mountain decision, in the works for one decade, was a response to September 11.

Energy policy has reached such an impasse that Congress hasn't even passed the 2002 energy bill, which would have set energy policy, though all contentious provisions have long since been expunged. The Senate debated the bill off and on throughout the winter and spring, staging various publicity-oriented showdowns but then putting off the House-Senate conference needed to enact anything. The World's Greatest Deliberative Body seems to feel that when it comes to energy policy, what the United States needs now is no change at all. How reassuring!

THERE IS PLENTY of blame to go around. Bush and his White House are terrified of the political consequences of action against global warming; though in the short-term the principal greenhouse reform would be to improve the efficiency of fossil-fuel use, which would reduce U.S. dependence on Persian Gulf imports—making such an action worthwhile even if the climate were not a concern. Early in

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his presidency, Bush asked the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) for advice on what to do about SUV miles per gallon (MPG). After the NAS inconveniently presented the case for higher standards, Bush waffled, venturing only that the Department of Transportation should "begin rulemaking"—which may take years—rather than supporting any of the fuel-efficiency improvement proposals that as a result died in Congress.

For their part, Democrats are equally committed to inaction. In March a fuel-efficiency deal brokered by John Kerry and John McCain was poised to come before the Senate. It would have required that new American autos reach an average of 36 MPG by 2015, a goal called realistic by the NAS, and would have dropped special treatment for SUVs. (Currently, new SUVs are allowed to average about seven miles per gallon less than new regular cars; real-world averages for SUVs are lower still. Partly as a result, average new-vehicle fuel efficiency in the United States is today at the lowest point in 22 years.) The McCain-Kerry approach would have reduced petroleum use and greenhouse gases in a sensible, technologically feasible manner, while making roads safer by discouraging production not of medium SUVs such as the Ford Explorer but of ultra-heavy, antisocial vehicles such as the Ford Expedition and the General Motors Hummer, which today constitute rolling threats to public safety.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

Worried that McCain and Kerry would accomplish actual reform, opponents hurriedly brought forward a Senate amendment that essentially banned any immediate increase in SUV MPG, and it passed with only 38 votes against it. Since on this resolution a "no" vote was a vote for fuel economy, this means only 38 members of the United States Senate—and only 31 of 50 Democrats—favored immediate MPG improvement. Because oversized vehicles are Detroit's most profitable vehicle type—owing partly to an import protection that lives in violation of free-trade rules—the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Democrats from UAW states joined conservatives in an unholy alliance to oppose progress on fuel efficiency. So much for the public sacrifice in the national interest that was supposed to reign after September 11.

Another reason many Democrats were lukewarm on improving gas mileage is that the enviro lobby granted them a virtual free pass on this issue. Enviros lobbied with white fury against ANWR drilling, their key move coming when the League of Conservation Voters told members of the Senate that this year's rating in the League's influential voter scorecards would essentially be determined by their ANWR votes. But after carpet-bombing Congress on ANWR, enviros lobbied only modestly on the MPG issue. Why the difference? No one can be sure. But ANWR drilling is both a pleasantly symbolic ideological issue and, since 99 percent of donors to environmental groups don't live in Alaska, can be defeated without personally affecting most environmentalists in any way. On the other hand, there are plenty of environmentalists and enviro donors who drive big SUVs—especially the gas-guzzler-loving elite of Hollywood. Had a higher MPG standard been enacted, some environmental donors might have had to make a lifestyle change rather than just demanding change from others.

And what of an ANWR/MPG compromise? This magazine (see "Over a Barrel," August 20, 2001) favored both expanding drilling in Alaska and requiring higher vehicle fuel economy, a middle-ground compromise that would have reduced America's addiction to Gulf oil, diminished the economic power of Gulf-state fanatics, cut greenhouse gases, and kept petroleum-production jobs at home rather than outsourcing the work to Saddam. An ANWR/MPG compromise would have required both sides to surrender some ideology and recognize the other side's reasonable arguments. And so the idea went absolutely nowhere. In fact, only three members of the United States Senate endorsed both ANWR drilling and higher SUV mileage. Below is the honor role; it won't take you long to read:

Daniel K. Akaka (Democrat-Hawaii)
Judd Gregg (Republican-New Hampshire)
Daniel K. Inouye (Democrat-Hawaii)

Three total votes for common-sense energy progress.

Sometime this fall an energy bill will probably pass, but it will consist of crumbs, symbolic gestures, and various special favors to the connected. The bill will be widely touted as containing incentives for wind power, renewable fuel, and other desirable improvements; but such incentives have already been in law for 20 years, and "green" energy still accounts for only about 1 percent of all U.S. power. The real answer is to reduce Gulf imports, restrain oil waste, and increase domestic exploration. We've had one year since September 11 supposedly shook us out of complacency. And we haven't even started the job. ■

W. forgets the nuclear threat.

Old Guard

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

THE UNITED STATES added a critical ounce of prevention to its war on terrorism last week. One hundred pounds of prevention, actually, in the form of bomb-grade, highly enriched uranium airlifted from Serbia to Russia for safekeeping. The nuclear material had been sitting around for more than a decade at Belgrade's Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences—a decrepit civilian nuclear reactor—in small, low-radiation canisters that would have been easy to carry off without special equipment. The site was protected

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by little more than a barbed-wire fence and a few lightly armed guards. And of course it was located in a country with which we had recently been at war, in a region home to Albanian Muslim fundamentalists allied with Al Qaeda. All of which made U.S. officials very, very nervous. If the material were stolen, it would have taken only modest expertise and equipment to make it into two or three crude, Hiroshima-sized bombs. Instead the Russians will now convert it into a relatively harmless form for commercial use. The operation was hailed, understandably, as a major advance in the war on terrorism. One administration official described it to *The Washington Post* as a "groundbreaking event." Another bragged to *The New York Times*, "This is a big win."

But it's a win that almost didn't happen. Indeed, what's most striking about "Project Vinca" is less its deft execution than the fact that it took so long. The Vinca mission was first conceived well before September 11. And even after the September 11 attacks, it took nearly one year for the United States to overcome the bureaucratic infighting and legal technicalities that hindered the operation. For instance, the Serbians were happy to part with their uranium—but only on the condition that the United States clean up the residual radioactive waste left behind. Yet Congress has strictly prohibited the use of federal funds for purely "environmental" purposes. And so the George W. Bush administration had to go begging to the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), a private nonprofit group, which donated $5 million for the cleanup. (Send your thank-you notes to CNN mogul Ted Turner, who bankrolls NTI.) "The notion that the U.S. government has to go to the private sector to get handouts for fundamental security issues is just ridiculous," says Matthew Bunn, a nuclear proliferation expert at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. Given that there are at least two dozen more nuclear sites around the world with bomb-grade material and shoddy security—sites that should have been secured long ago—the government's reliance on private funding is also unacceptable. Yet no one expects rapid progress anytime soon.

This is not how it was supposed to be. After September 11 the Bush administration made preventing terrorist acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) its highest priority. The president himself was said to be particularly fixated on the threat of nuclear terror. An October briefing about the potential for nuclear terrorism in the United States from CIA Director George Tenet "sent the president through the roof," intelligence sources told *The Washington Post*. "With considerable emotion, two officials said, Bush ordered his national security team to give nuclear terrorism priority over every other threat to the United States." Nothing would better demonstrate our new post-September 11 resolve than a fierce, uncompromising, worldwide clampdown on nuclear materials and expertise. No expense would be spared. Bold action would replace idle talk. And yet so far, it hasn't.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

THE FIRST SIGN that the Bush administration still doesn't get it when it comes to nuclear terrorism is the homeland security strategy it released this summer. The document narrowly defines homeland security as limited to prevention and response within America's borders. It addresses chemical and biological weapons, for instance, solely from the perspective of vaccines and decontamination. And it likewise proposes to defend against a nuclear blast by "[p]revent[ing] terrorist use of nuclear weapons through better sensors and [inspection] procedures." Of course, the ability to respond to domestic chemical, biological, or nuclear attacks is essential. But the White House strategy makes almost no mention of efforts to prevent terrorists from getting their hands on these weapons in the first place. That may be a more complicated task, but it is ultimately a lot more effective. The harsh truth is that once terrorists have a bomb, finding it, much less disarming it in time, will be exceedingly difficult. Therefore homeland security begins abroad—and that doesn't just mean invading Iraq. It means putting together a broad-based campaign for the nonmilitary preemption of materials that could be used to make a terrorist—or Iraqi—bomb.

The administration's questionable policy posture was illustrated earlier this year, as millions of Americans flocked to movie theaters to watch a stolen nuke annihilate Baltimore in *The Sum of All Fears*. Days after the Tom Clancy thriller opened, the U.S. Customs Service mounted a p.r. campaign to reassure the nation that the film's terrorists—who smuggle a bomb by ship into Baltimore's harbor—could be thwarted. Customs officials showed off radiation and gamma-ray detectors and proudly declared, as Customs Commissioner Robert C. Bonner put it, that "any kind of nuclear weapon is going to stand out like a sore thumb." As CNN showed footage of inspectors scanning cargo containers, Bonner assured viewers the "Sum" scenario was implausible.

It was a deft exercise in p.r. but a highly misleading one. Even after September 11, Customs only inspects between 2 percent and 10 percent of the 40-foot-long shipping containers that arrive in the United States every day by the thousands. A nuclear device, moreover, could be shielded with lead from detection by most sensors. And a terrorist could make a mockery of Bonner's boast by detonating his cargo, remotely or by timer, before it is ever unloaded and subject to scanning—when, for example, the ship carrying it first enters the harbor. When I asked Stephen Flynn, a National Security Council (NSC) official in the Clinton administration and a well-known border-security expert, what he thought of Customs' public reassurances, he laughed. The only semi-reliable way to stave off such a disaster, Flynn says, is to create a high-tech system of shipping security that includes inspection of cargo headed to the United States *before* it leaves foreign ports. But Rotterdam is the only one of the 20 "megaports" through which cargo passes where inspections have begun. Negotiations with other foreign

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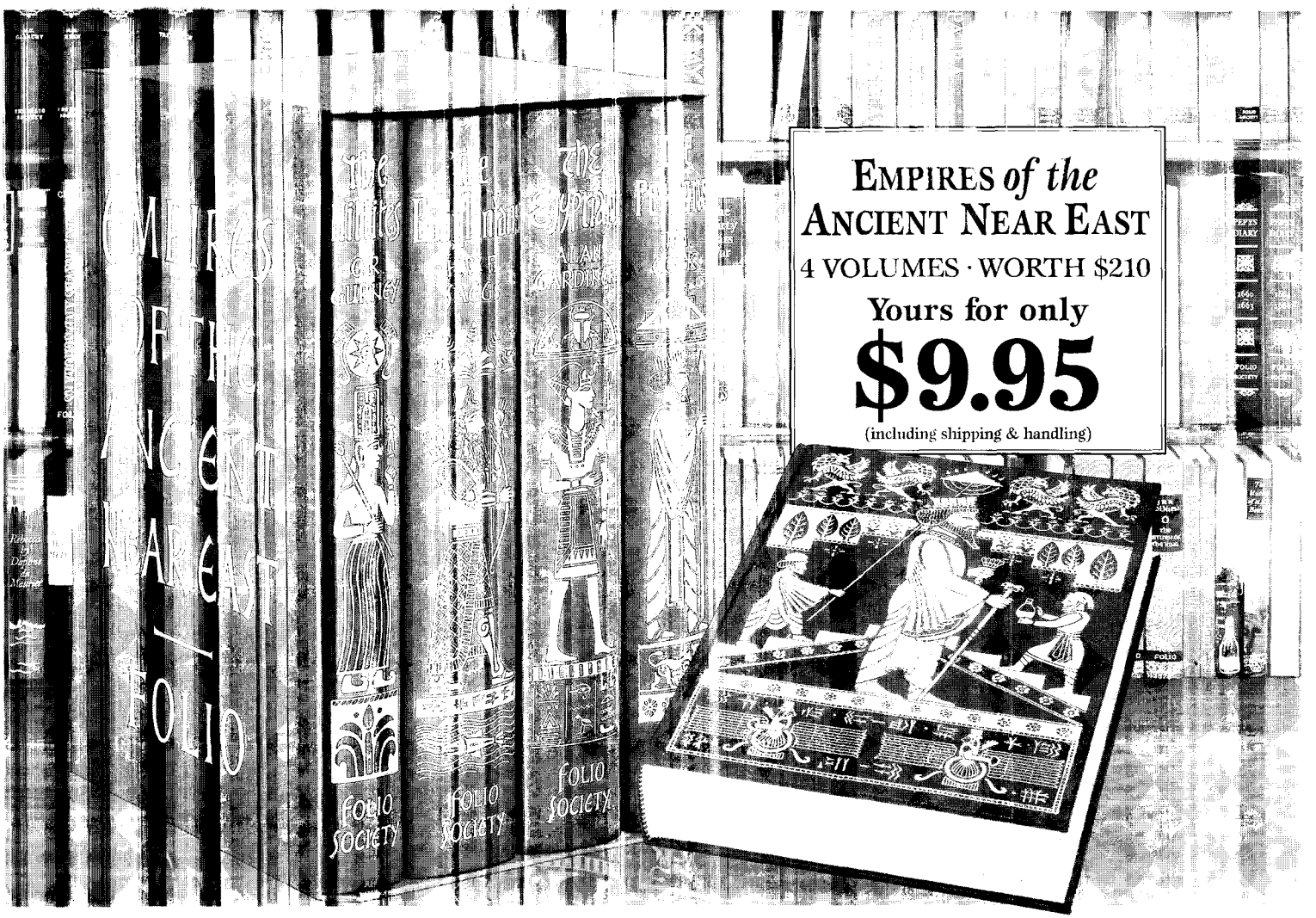

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governments are moving slowly. What's more, Bush's recent pocket veto of $5.1 billion in congressional emergency spending will prevent $39 million budgeted for this new Container Security Initiative from being spent.

But even if a comprehensive system for detecting nuclear devices in foreign ports were in place—and adequately funded—it wouldn't be enough. Terrorists might still be able to hide the bomb in lead or otherwise circumvent detection; and even if they were caught, the disclosure that they had come so close to a successful nuclear attack on the United States would have unpredictable effects on society and the economy. A true anti-nuclear homeland security strategy needs to start *before* terrorists get nuclear materials—by clamping down on such materials at sources such as the Vinca Institute and similar sites in places like Belarus, Ukraine, and even the Republic of Congo. But rather than give preemption efforts the kind of high-level attention one would expect for a top-priority threat, Bush's homeland security strategy leaves them to midlevel bureaucracies in the State and Defense Departments—the same places where they have languished, underfunded and largely ignored, for years.

UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION'S existing nuclear security regime, bureaucratic problems like the one that nearly derailed last week's Belgrade airlift are endemic. When the Clinton administration pulled off a similar removal of nuclear materials from Kazakhstan in 1995, the operation bogged down at one point over the question of whether the Energy or Defense Departments would pay for the cost of "ready to eat" meals for the U.S. teams in the former Soviet republic. It is not uncommon, says Harvard's Bunn, for three U.S. teams from different agencies to arrive at the American Embassy in Moscow en route to inspect the same Russian nuclear site—none of them aware of the others' missions. This year millions of dollars for new initiatives in the former Soviet Union—including security upgrades at ten former Soviet nuclear weapons sites and training for guards at nuclear storage sites—were stalled for months as administration officials haggled over whether to "certify" full Russian cooperation with conditions of U.S. aid. (And because the administration must certify Russian compliance annually—in six different categories, ranging from compliance with arms control agreements to protection of human and minority rights—progress could easily stall again when the next deadline comes in October.) Current regulations also put very narrow limitations on how the United States can employ former Russian scientists who might be tempted to work for terrorists or for "axis of evil" states; simply paying a scientist to go into retirement, for instance, is prohibited by law. Moreover, regulations mandate that American contractors play a role in security upgrades at Russian nuclear sites, a requirement that often leads to delays. The Russians may be willing to build a new electric security fence, for instance—but not if it means an American contractor is tromping around a nuclear weapons plant. Standoffs like this have left U.S.-bought security equipment lying in unopened crates at Russian sites as recently as this spring.

And those are just the problems faced by U.S. programs in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Many of the most worrisome nuclear sites are in other, still more lawless areas in Africa and the Middle East. One reactor in the Congolese capital of Kinshasa, for instance, is protected by only a rusted, padlocked metal gate. It has been missing a fuel rod since the 1980s, when the director evidently lent out his key ring without realizing the reactor key was on it. (When recently questioned on the matter by a Western reporter, the director feigned deafness.) Some reports suggest the rod was stolen and shopped around by the Italian mafia, although its fate is unclear. Nor is anyone quite sure what's happening at the plant now. Since a 1997 coup in the Congo, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has not been allowed to inspect the plant. There are disputes about whether this reactor produces material fissile enough to build a crude nuke, but certainly it could provide the key components of a dreaded, radiation-spewing "dirty bomb." And the Kinshasa reactor is just one example of the similarly appalling conditions that can be found at several other reactors in nations like Romania, Uzbekistan, and Ghana.

Listening to Bush's uncompromising post-September 11 rhetoric, you might have expected that the U.S. shock troops would have flown to Kinshasa within days of the World Trade Center's collapse. Yet even now the administration and Congress haven't cut through the legal restrictions that make such an operation difficult. Current law still makes it extremely difficult for Washington to expand some of its most effective nuclear-security programs beyond the former USSR, where American efforts have been focused since 1991. To its credit, the Senate recently passed legislation giving the Defense Department broad new flexibility to spend nuclear security funds wherever it wants. But incredibly, House Republicans—motivated by residual anti-communism and skepticism about anything that sounds like foreign aid—passed a specific prohibition this summer *against* using these funds in other countries. The White House has exerted no visible effort against this senseless provision.

THERE'S WIDE AGREEMENT that the fundamental problem with U.S. efforts to secure WMD abroad is a lack of vision, coordination, and leadership at the heart of our government—that is, in the White House itself. According to a May 2002 General Accounting Office report, for instance, existing efforts to combat nuclear smuggling are "not effectively coordinated and [lack] an overall government-wide plan to guide [them]." The obvious solution would be the creation of a White House post, with direct access to the president, to oversee the myriad programs run by the Departments of State, Defense, and Energy. Yet despite years of admonitions from foreign policy luminaries of both parties,

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there is still no one in the executive branch with both the mandate and the authority to create a broader vision for a campaign against nightmare weapons. Bush's proposed Department of Homeland Security, with its domestic focus, doesn't solve this problem. ("[Tom] Ridge wonders, 'How do we deal with something?'" says NTI's Laura Holgate. "But that's very different from, 'How do we prevent something in the first place?'") Until a high-level post is created, coordinating America's nuclear counterproliferation programs will remain the principal task of Susan Cook, a midlevel deputy at the NSC, who does not even report directly to Condi Rice, let alone the president.

Until nuclear security is coordinated at the highest levels, the White House will continue to muddle along, giving some programs more money than they can spend, while senselessly chopping the budgets of others. The IAEA, for instance, is the only global institution charged with policing nuclear material around the world. It is a fine frontline watchdog. And yet its $100 million budget for monitoring materials in dozens of countries is on par with the police department of a midsize American city. Moreover, that budget has seen zero real growth over the past 15 years, even as the agency's responsibilities have increased enormously. Without more money, for example, the IAEA may no longer be able to operate the security cameras it has installed to monitor the spent fuel pools of several reactors worldwide.

Meanwhile, Congress has had to bully the Bush administration into amply funding the joint U.S.-Russia Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR), which the White House initially sought to cut in its last budget. Even now the administration is asking for slightly less money than the Clinton administration's last, pre-September 11 request. Funding to employ "loose geeks"—the thousands of Russian scientists whose knowledge poses a proliferation threat—remains paltry, which astonishes Amy Smithson of the Henry L. Stimson Center. "It's much cheaper to address a proliferation threat at the source than it is to try to defend against it." And at its current pace and budget, the Department of Energy won't be able to secure every vulnerable Russian nuclear site—never mind those in other nations—until 2008.

THAT'S MUCH TOO long to wait. A few months before September 11 a special commission headed by former Senator Howard Baker and former White House Counsel Lloyd Cutler examined the state of America's anti-nuclear programs and found them disastrously lacking. The nuclear danger is "the most urgent unmet national security threat" to the country, they concluded, adding that "the current budget levels are inadequate and the current management of the U.S. government's response is too diffuse, ... leav[ing] an unacceptable risk of failure and the potential for catastrophic consequences." These facts have not fundamentally changed since September 11. At this summer's G-8 summit the Bush administration pledged more money for these programs—an encouraging step—but has yet to follow through with any short-term commitments of funding. Al Qaeda's leadership, needless to say, has no equivalent delays holding it back. At this pace, says Harvard terrorism expert and former Clinton administration defense official Graham Allison, a nuclear explosion in the United States can be imagined "quite vividly" and is "not even unlikely." Our attitude should be, "Go get that stuff *today*," Allison says. "Not tomorrow. *Today*."

Washington's response to the nuclear terror threat is in many ways a case study in its overall attitude toward homeland security. After Pearl Harbor the U.S. economy was quickly and fundamentally redirected toward the war effort. Today the Bush administration is calling for $38 billion in homeland defense spending next year, which equals about 0.4 percent of America's GDP—or roughly one-tenth of the U.S. military budget. Bush's homeland security strategy pledges that "we will spend whatever is necessary to secure the homeland." Yet the president fights with Congress over minuscule increases in homeland security spending—including money for those cargo inspections. And while the Bush administration is prepared to spill American blood to keep Saddam Hussein from building a nuclear bomb, it has failed to untangle the bureaucracy that is giving Osama bin Laden the time to steal one. George W. Bush may say that the nuclear threat is his top priority. But he still isn't acting that way. ■

Why deflation isn't a problem.

Less Than Zero

By NOAM SCHEIBER

IT'S NOT EVERY day that first-rate economists such as Paul Krugman and Berkeley Professor Brad DeLong offer the same economic advice as a knee-jerk Wall Street booster like Robert Novak. But that's pretty much what happened earlier this month, when all three men criticized Alan Greenspan for failing to lower interest rates amid mounting deflationary pressure. Krugman went first in his August 16 *New York Times* column, distilling the conclusion of a recent Federal Reserve study into the following advice: "'[I]f you think deflation is even a possibility, throw money at the economy now and don't worry about overdoing it.' And yet the Fed chose not to cut rates on Tuesday. Why?" Three days later, in his nationally syndicated column, Novak likewise pronounced himself incredulous that the Fed had failed to lower rates, complaining, à la Krugman, that "the Fed still seems oblivious to problems of deflation and credit unavailability that are compressing the real economy." Finally DeLong entered the fray in the August 21 *Financial Times*, noting, "If you do the math, you conclude that by the summer of 2004 the U.S. will

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have an inflation rate—at least as measured by the GDP deflator—that is less than zero [i.e., deflation]. ... It is in this context that the Federal Reserve's failure to cut interest rates so far this spring and summer is very puzzling."

You'd think that if Krugman, DeLong, and Novak all agree on something, it must be so obviously true as to be utterly uncontroversial. Alas, that's not the case. While deflation may be a concern, lowering interest rates today won't do much to address it.

The basic Krugman-DeLong argument (Novak doesn't make an argument so much as a series of curmudgeonly assertions) goes as follows: Even though the economy is no longer in recession, GDP growth is still barely creeping along at a 1 percent to 2 percent annual rate—which is to say, several percentage points below *potential* GDP growth, the maximum sustainable (i.e., noninflationary) rate of economic growth. We know that inflation tends to fall anytime such an "output gap" arises. Since inflation is already very low—between 1 percent and 2 percent per year, depending on which measure you use—there are probably only so many months of output gap we can endure before falling inflation turns into outright deflation. And that would be disastrous for the economy. When the average price level is falling, the value of people's savings increases over time, giving them an incentive to put off purchases. If unchecked, this trend can lead to a vicious cycle in which falling demand leads to unemployment, and rising unemployment further erodes demand.

The best way to fend off this grim eventuality, Krugman and DeLong conclude, is to lower interest rates preemptively. As DeLong puts it in his *Financial Times* piece, "[I]f the central bank pushes short-term interest rates near zero, businesses are faced with the choice between investing in their business or watching the real value of their cash on hand shrink by [roughly the current inflation rate]"—an offer they're "unlikely to refuse." But the catch is that the central bank has to move while there still *is* an inflation rate. Once inflation turns into deflation, businesses won't spend their cash—regardless of how low interest rates are.

One can certainly quibble with the assumptions DeLong and Krugman use to generate their deflation scenario. DeLong argues that the economy could have grown by four percentage points more than it did over the last two years; others, such as Ohio State University economist Steve Cecchetti, put the output gap at well below three percentage points, since the "economy was operating above potential" prior to the recent slowdown. But the real problem with the Krugman-DeLong analysis is less that it overestimates the likelihood of deflation than that its proposed solution would either be ineffectual or actually make things worse. Krugman and DeLong propose counteracting deflationary forces by lowering interest rates, which would stimulate demand and ultimately raise prices. This is, in fact, a basic axiom of macroeconomics. Unfortunately, it's also one that unravels once you consider the current economic outlook.

Despite the collapse of the tech sector and the stock market over the last year and a half, consumption has held up remarkably well. Retail sales rose 1.2 percent in July, following a healthy 1.4 percent increase in June. If consumers stop spending now, it won't be because interest rates aren't low enough; it'll be because exceptionally low interest rates have allowed them to amass too much debt already, debt that gets tougher and tougher to service as jobs become scarcer. (The average American credit-cardholder has nearly $10,000 in credit-card debt.) Likewise, the housing sector has been very strong this last year and a half—so strong, in fact, that it has become one of the most inflationary sectors in the entire economy. Nationwide, median home prices shot up 7.4 percent in the second quarter, after rising 8.1 percent in the first three months of the year. If people suddenly stop buying, it'll probably be because they fear that the market is getting overheated and could collapse, not because interest rates aren't low enough. (A better time to lower interest rates would be *after* the housing bubble bursts.)

That leaves investment by businesses. It's true, as DeLong implies in his article, that business spending is probably the most important still-depressed item in our national accounts, having now contracted for seven of the last eight quarters and falling again in the current one. But it's not at all clear how lowering interest rates would help on that front either. Businesses haven't been buying much new equipment even though interest rates have been at 40-year lows for almost one year now. The reason is that firms in many sectors—audio equipment, semiconductor equipment, sporting goods—face excess capacity and falling prices. In this context, any firm that buys equipment to expand capacity would simply shoot itself in the foot: It would generate more output and further drive down prices.

In June *Fortune* magazine interviewed the CEOs of DuPont and UPS, who explained that while they were modestly upgrading their stock of information technology, they were either not expanding or scaling back capacity. CEOs are retrenching at an even faster pace in more deflation-plagued industries. A recent *Washington Post* article reported that the Big Three domestic automakers will likely retire some 1.5 million units of auto-making capacity—about seven assembly plants' worth—when labor contracts expire next year. Meanwhile, in an industry like telecom, where there is too much capacity because there are too many players, lowering interest rates could exacerbate the situation by keeping marginal companies afloat and delaying a similar restructuring (see "No Pain, No Gain," July 22).

On his website, DeLong is adamant that there is no such thing as excess capacity in the economy as a whole, only lackluster demand. That's true, as far as it goes. And if you think it tells the whole story, then cutting interest rates is the obvious response to the current situation. But the idea that demand is the problem breaks down once you look at distribution of prices across sectors. Generally speaking, there is

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steady deflation in manufacturing, where capacity is more difficult to adjust and where global competition can lead to oversupply. On the other hand, there is steady *in*flation in services—in everything from car insurance to sporting events—whose capacity is either easy to contract (the former) or was difficult to expand in the first place (the latter), and where competition is more localized. Now that could certainly change—the latest consumer-confidence numbers show a sharp decline. But for the moment, it looks like our biggest problems are on the supply side. And those problems wouldn't have been solved by anything the Fed considered doing at its mid-August meeting. ■

The new Bush doctrine.

Son Shine

By MARTIN PERETZ

I AM NOT one of those who believes democracy will come soon either to Iraq or to the entity to be called Palestine (when—and if—the Palestinians finally grasp that they cannot have both a state and a warrant to kill Israelis). There is no reason to believe either of these polities will succeed in the democratic experiment that has failed or, to be more precise, has not been seriously tried in the Arab world. But there are improvements short of democracy: police who are not routinely brutal, government that isn't routinely corrupt, and courts that are not satraps of politics. And the Bush administration deserves credit for making clear that it will not merely enable friendlier but just as murderous successor regimes in Baghdad and Ramallah.

It is not the pursuit of good government, however, that has put this country on a collision course with the leadership in Palestine and Iraq. Our motives are more fundamental than that: The U.S. government has made a decision that it will not permit either mass terror by Baghdad or random terror by the many Palestinian militias to set the norms of how others, in the region and beyond, live or die. This is the critical principle underlying our Iraqi policy and our Palestinian policy. It is, at root, a statement about how we define civilization and how we defend it from its unconventionally armed discontents.

And how exactly has this prerogative come to the United States? Iraq has been in violation of the international weapons-inspection regime for four years. Baghdad has again and again engaged in farcical negotiations about the inspectors' return, and many of our allies have willingly participated in the farce. But in reality, such offers are simply a ruse to buy Saddam Hussein time to do what inspections are supposed to prevent: building weapons of mass death. And since no international body is willing to accept the consequences of this fraud, the responsibility falls to the United States. Our obligation is an extension of the one we assumed at the end of the Gulf war, when the United States guaranteed the lives of the Kurds and Shia, whose kin Saddam had murdered in large numbers. Before World War II no one, neither the Jews nor the Czechs nor the Chinese, were protected from their tormentors. But, had their lives mattered to the Allies, the United States and Britain might not have waited so long to take up arms and, thus, would have begun the war on a stronger footing. Morally, at least, the analogy holds for today. By defending the Kurds, who have experienced Saddam's gas firsthand, we are also defending ourselves.

As for the Palestinians, their leaders (and those of the Arab states) have been entreating us for decades to press the Israelis on their behalf, and we have done so. But not until this summer has an American president set even minimal conditions on our mediation. What President Bush has decided is that the United States cannot be an honest mediator so long as one of the parties to the conflict consists of mendacious murderers. If they want the United States to be their facilitator, they must abide by American terms. Otherwise, they're on their own.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE not to contrast America's new determination to incapacitate Saddam Hussein and Yasir Arafat with Bill Clinton's failed stewardship of these two dockets. Before he even entered the Oval Office, Clinton mused that it wouldn't take much to welcome the regime in Baghdad back into the family of nations. It was a colossal blunder, and then-Vice President Al Gore was quickly dispatched to explain that the president hadn't really meant what he said. But it wasn't just Clinton. At the State Department there was Warren Christopher, a languid gentleman easily persuaded that the ruthless foreign leaders with which he dealt were as languid as he. The National Security Council (NSC) was run by Anthony Lake, the Berkshire farmer who believed everyone was as well-intentioned as he thought himself to be. He was succeeded at the NSC by Sandy Berger, a trade lawyer who saw every conflict as an opportunity to devise another purchase-and-sale agreement. Christopher's successor at Foggy Bottom, Madeleine Albright, proved little better, dramatically failing to establish her intellectual authority even over a crowd filled with undergraduates at Ohio State.

This was prelapsarian foreign policy. When it came to Israel and its abutters, the Clintonites uttered the words "peace process" sanctimoniously, as if in some lordly benediction. But in the end, the peace process came to embody a highly ironic strategy. The more hideous the instances of Palestinian terror, the more Israel was expected to make truly perilous accommodations—until Ehud Barak, under Clintonite pressure, offered the most perilous accommodations of all, and they were still not enough.

George W. Bush has been far shrewder. But the more interesting and more salient contrast is not with his predecessor but with his father. This is a true filial drama. The son, once depicted by even some of his own supporters

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as a patsy for his father, is actually rebuffing the elder's abundant biases about the Middle East. And, in now making Saddam his target, George W. is in effect conceding that George H.W. allowed decisive victory to slip from our hands eleven years ago.

The justification, you'll remember, was that Saddam—and his tiny minority of Tikriti Sunnis—must remain in power to preserve the stability of Iraq. Almost no one asked then, and almost no one asks now, why Iraq's stability is such an obvious good. It certainly does little for the Kurds or the majority Shia. (The West's false equation of Iraqi stability with Sunni domination is an old story that dates back to British plenipotentiary Gertrude Bell's establishment of the Hashemite Sunni monarchy 80 years ago.) And who in the region has a desperate interest in seeing the Iraqi Shia kept down? The Saudis, who fear the example they may set for their Shia brethren across the border. James Baker served as paladin for the Saudi royals while Poppy's secretary of state and with The Carlyle Group as transfer agent, and he now serves as banker and counselor to Riyadh. Baker, more than any American not on the Supreme Court, put W. in the White House. And so for the president now to defy him and the Saudis is a kind of declaration of independence.

Baker's *New York Times* op-ed last week, then, can be read as a public throwing-in of the towel. Yes, he wants a Security Council resolution warranting military action and is willing to tarry to get one. Yes, he'd prefer Arab governments to join an international coalition like the one that prevented a march on Baghdad in 1991. But, costly though he thinks it will be in blood and treasure, Baker nonetheless declared for all to see, "The only realistic way to effect regime change in Iraq is through the application of military force, including sufficient ground troops." Baker's apostasy from the Republican establishment's "go easy on Iraq" faction is devastating to them.

And devastating in particular to Brent Scowcroft, who has been trying hard to convene a reunion of Bushies who opposed going to war against Iraq the first time. Scowcroft has the distinction of having been wrong about virtually everything important in foreign policy over the last decade and a half. He was wrong about Mikhail Gorbachev and his resilience. He was wrong about Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia, generally. And now he is wrong, once again, about Iraq. *The New York Sun* recently performed a valuable service by reminding us of the tawdry details of Scowcroft's career that color his present effort: He runs a big business that deals with, among others, shortsighted countries and companies that prefer Saddam to whatever might come next.

Scowcroft's pivotal ally within the administration is Secretary of State Colin Powell, who also has a less-than-stellar track record on the major conflicts of the post-cold-war age. (After Scowcroft made his anti-war comments on CBS's "Face the Nation" on August 4, Powell called to thank him.) Within the Bush administration, Powell is where the "do little to Saddam Hussein" and the "do a lot for Yasir Arafat" positions meet. Were he not so valuable domestically, and would his departure not so rattle our allies, my guess is that his job would be little more secure than Harvey Pitt's.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, needless to say, is no better. In fact, it's far worse. Almost to a person its leaders opposed the Gulf war and, were Gore not an exception, I suspect that he and Clinton would not have won the White House in 1992. And today's Democrats are showing that bad habits die hard. So, although not openly opposing the next Gulf war, they are calling for "national dialogue"—a dialogue in which, truth be told, they have precious little to say.

The party is little better when it comes to the Palestinians. It's true that only Jesse Jackson has visited Arafat recently. (Jackson was also on his way to Gaza for an audience with Sheik Yassin, the Hamas headman, but even he felt the need to turn back once Hamas claimed credit for the Hebrew University bombing.) But the Democrats have institutional bonds to the Arafat crowd. Clinton had more meetings with the Palestinian chairman than with any other foreign leader, and many top Democrats probably still have delicatessen pictures with Yasir hanging in their offices. At first the Bush administration seemed to be pursuing the same dangerous liaison. Until, that is, the president and the advisers to whom he listens changed the plot. The Democrats then faulted Bush for distancing himself from the conflict, as if the sheer frequency of presidential statements about ending the cycle of violence would actually stop it. This was, in fact, the theme of virtually every potential Democratic presidential candidate. Only Joe Lieberman has produced a concrete new suggestion. He proposes that the United States admit more Palestinian refugees to siphon off the pressure of want in the West Bank and Gaza. But that would merely add magnitudes to the anti-Americanism that already resides within this country's shores. And so no other prominent Democrat seconded the motion.

The pro-Democratic press is equally dismissive of the president's new policy. In *The New Yorker*, former TNR Editor Hendrik Hertzberg wrote, "The Bush administration still seems unwilling to exert itself to deflect the two sides from their headlong rush toward the abyss." In the same week, Martin Indyk, a key part of the Middle East apparat during the Clinton years, asked on *The New York Times*' op-ed page, "Does the Bush administration know what it's doing in the Middle East?" He answered his own question: No, of course not. Their policy is "erratic," full of "contradictions" and "mixed messages." But better a slightly erratic policy than a consistently wrong one.

What the Democrats and much of the press refuse to admit is that the Bush administration has fundamentally changed the assumptions underlying American policy toward Israel and the Palestinians. The first and most basic change is that Palestinian terrorism will not be rewarded with forced Israeli concessions. This puts an end to the incentive system that encouraged atrocity after atrocity. The second change is that, to secure U.S. help of any kind, the Palestinian Authority

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(P.A.) will be obliged to practice financial transparency—which will either end its corruption and links to terrorism or make them plain for all to see. The third is that cease-fires must bind all the Palestinians and not just Israel. Even the militias close to the P.A. are balking at this last burden. So if the P.A. cannot produce a comprehensive end to the killing, it must pursue and incarcerate those many militiamen and women, pious and secular, intent on maintaining murder as a political instrument. And if it can't, or won't, the conclusion will be obvious: that the P.A., under whatever leadership, is not a vehicle that can assure its own constituents and Israel reasonable security.

Bush has countenanced the Ariel Sharon hard-line strategy: No quarter for terror. And though it is difficult for the peace processors to concede, the first real signs of Palestinian accommodation to the simple reality of Israel's existence have come in the wake of Sharon's pummeling. Almost every certified wise head proclaimed that Sharon's obsession with Arafat would only strengthen the terrorist's hand. This cliché is now proven nonsense.

But related clichés are alive and well. And so last Saturday, Bill Keller wrote in *The New York Times*, "Some months ago I suggested that the road to Baghdad leads through Jerusalem, meaning that a more evenhanded good-faith American effort to get peace on track there would help our credibility with the Arab world when we take on Iraq." The assumptions behind this platitude governed American policy for close to a decade, and they have proven false, since American good-faith efforts produced ever-more violent and rejectionist Palestinians. The road to Jerusalem more likely leads through Baghdad than the reverse. Once the Palestinians see that the United States will no longer tolerate their hero Saddam Hussein, depressed though they may be, they may also come finally to grasp that Israel is here to stay and that accommodating to this reality is the one thing that can bring them the generous peace they require. ■

Will Saddam's troops fight?

Small Arms

By MICHAEL RUBIN

TODAY, BA'ADRE IS once again a sleepy, backwater town in northern Iraq, 25 miles south of Dohuk and miles from the nearest paved road. Few Iraqis have ever heard of Ba'adre, and fewer still visit. But, for 72 hours in December 2000, Ba'adre captured attention in crisis rooms in Washington, London, and Ankara after Iraqi troops invaded the Kurdish safe haven and laid siege to the town. The last time Saddam Hussein had been so bold—in August 1996, when his Republican Guard invaded the Kurdish capital of Erbil—the Bill Clinton administration had responded by lamely firing cruise missiles at lightly manned Iraqi military facilities hundreds of miles south of the invasion zone. But in Ba'adre the United States went right at the invading force. And when American warplanes flew low over the Iraqi lines, 138 Iraqi soldiers threw down their weapons and surrendered without a shot being fired; the rest quickly withdrew. The lesson wasn't complicated: Not many Iraqis want to die for Saddam. Soon after the surrender at Ba'adre, I met a Baghdad Arab in a restaurant in the northeastern Iraqi city of Sulaymaniyah and asked him about Iraqi military morale. "Do you really think my son wants to be in uniform?" he asked. "Or anyone in his unit? He hears about life outside of Iraq. That's what he wants to live, not what he wants to fight."

THAT MESSAGE IS getting lost in the loud and muddled American debate over war with Iraq. If there's an emerging conventional wisdom uniting many of the pundits, military analysts, and former government officials who have taken to the airwaves and op-ed pages in recent weeks, it's that the United States can overthrow Saddam, but it will be messy and painful. In particular, commentators worry that a U.S. assault will bog down in urban warfare. "It's going to involve Iraqis hiding behind civilian populations, ambushing us from the basements and roofs of various buildings, trying to use shoulder-launched weaponry against our helicopters, and making life difficult. We will win, but we could lose a thousand or more people if things go badly," Brookings Institution scholar Michael O'Hanlon told CNN on August 9. One week later in *The Wall Street Journal*, former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft opined that liberating Iraq "would be very expensive ... and could as well be bloody." And this week a front-page, above-the-fold *New York Times* headline warned, "IRAQ SAID TO PLAN TANGLING THE U.S. IN STREET FIGHTING."

But there's reason to believe that these predictions—like many of those that preceded America's military successes in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and the first Gulf war—are too pessimistic. For one thing, the United States can't bog down in protracted warfare in Baghdad unless a significant number of Iraqi troops are willing to fight us there. And as the Ba'adre incident suggests, they may not be. In 1991, it's worth remembering, the Iraqi military collapsed and fled a mere 100 hours into the ground war. In May 2001, after Iraqi forces struck at Kifri, another Kurdish-held town, they were repelled by lightly armed Kurdish militiamen—who reportedly killed at least 30 of Saddam's men. Iraqi military morale is extremely low. In April 1995 Saddam dismissed his army chief of staff after a mass defection of soldiers to the Iraqi opposition; some army units saw defection rates of 30 percent. Last summer, after Saddam ordered compulsory military training for boys between ages twelve and 17, many Iraqi families tried to hide their sons. Just last month opposition sources reported that Saddam's older son, Uday, has launched a campaign to hunt down deserters—who report-

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edly constitute up to 10 percent of Iraqi conscripts, according to military police statistics, despite the fact that the penalty for desertion can be death.

Some U.S. commentators worry that when American invaders show up in their capital, even anti-Saddam Iraqis will rally around the dictator. But that likely underestimates the depth of hatred most Iraqis feel toward their leader. Close to one in every five Iraqis, after all, lives in exile—having fled Saddam's regime—and more than 700,000 have perished in wars or government purges since Saddam formally assumed Iraq's presidency in 1979. That means most Iraqi families have a murdered or exiled family member or friend. And the victims are not merely Kurds and Shia. Roughly 400,000 Iraqis have taken refuge across the border in Jordan, the vast majority of them Sunni Arabs like Saddam himself. And last week's attack on the Iraqi embassy in Berlin was the work of Sunni Arabs as well.

Iraqis may be subjected to a great deal of pro-Saddam propaganda; but unlike, say, North Koreans, they have relatively easy access to outside information that debunks Saddam's lies about America's wickedness and his own invulnerability. Since 1992 the Kurds have controlled an area of northern Iraq twice the size of New Jersey. In the safe haven, satellite dishes abound, and Kurdish and Arab Iraqis frequently cross the porous line of control. What travelers from Baghdad see on the BBC, CNN, or Turkish television while visiting the Kurdish north, they then repeat to others in Saddam-held Iraq. As the United States draws closer to war, U.S. intelligence will likely supplement this with information from other sources—such as leaflet drops and radio broadcasts—as it did during the Afghan war. And already Iraqis are reacting to the news of impending war not by flocking to Baghdad to protect their leader but by fleeing the city in hopes of avoiding his fate. In late July travelers reported the flight of thousands of Iraqis out of Baghdad into the countryside.

Some pundits concede that most Iraqis, and even most Iraqi soldiers, would not fight for Saddam but suggest that the elite Republican Guard and the Special Republican Guard, which protects presidential compounds, would both stay loyal and cause problems for U.S. attackers. But even the Republican Guard's loyalty is far from assured. In June 1996 Iraqi security uncovered a coup plot among both Republican Guard and Special Guard troops. The Republican Guard may be Iraq's military elite, but, unlike the fanatical soldiers of Al Qaeda, they are basically mercenaries—Saddam's Baathism having long ago become the ideological equivalent of 1980s-era Soviet communism.

The Republican Guard serves Saddam because of fear and money. When the United States attacks, that fear will surely be counterbalanced by the prospect of facing America's much more fearsome army if they resist. And a U.S. invasion, if carried out effectively, could cut off the revenue on which Saddam currently relies to buy his elite troops' loyalty. A U.S. ground assault would likely use a combination of American special forces and Iraqi opposition forces to quickly separate Saddam from the lucrative oil fields in Kirkuk and in southern Iraq, areas where the local Kurdish, Turkmen, and Shia populations bear him extreme ill will. Saddam has recently moved troops nearer to the oil fields, but in the open desert those troops would be highly vulnerable to U.S. airpower. Alternatively, the United States could prevent Saddam from exporting oil by severing the Iraq-Syria pipeline, which runs from Kirkuk to the Syrian Mediterranean port of Banias, and by blockading Iraq's 36-mile-long coastline along the Persian Gulf. Under either scenario Saddam would quickly find himself without the money to pay even his best troops. And that could have a dramatic effect on their loyalty. Between 1991 and the 1996 implementation of the United Nations' oil-for-food program, for instance, Saddam refused to export large amounts of oil and instead chose to smuggle only small amounts for his own initiatives. The Iraqi economy plummeted. With their lifestyle threatened, some of Saddam's closest allies rebelled. In 1993, members of Saddam's own tribe in Tikrit attempted a coup. Destabilizing Saddam's revenue source could destabilize his hold on power once again.

And even if some members of the Republican Guard do make a stand in Baghdad, they'll likely be overwhelmed by U.S. firepower. U.S. airpower, after all, forced the collapse of both the Afghan and Yugoslav militaries. And since those conflicts, America's air capacity has grown considerably. In last year's Afghanistan campaign, more than 70 percent of the ordnance dropped by the United States was precision-guided, more than twice the figure from the 1999 Kosovo campaign and more than seven times that from the 1991 Gulf war. With high-tech ordnance now battle-tested, the use of precision bombs and smart weapons would likely be even higher in an Iraq campaign. While newspaper leaks have featured sobering assessments of the number of U.S. troops needed for an Iraq war, such numbers can be deceiving. Combat troops typically account for less than half of any deployment; the remaining support personnel serve outside the arena of battle. And the number of U.S. troops who would actually enter Baghdad would be far less even than that. And it's not only the remarkable advances in precision-guided ordnance and bunker-buster bombs that will likely prevent the United States from repeating its disastrous urban-warfare experience in Mogadishu—when 18 American Special Forces soldiers died trying to capture warlord Mohammed Farrah Aidid's top lieutenants. The mission itself makes that scenario implausible since the United States will not be trying to seize Saddam and his lieutenants but kill them, something that can be done more easily from the air. And from the air the United States has few worries. Saddam's air force consists of undertrained pilots flying antiquated and spare-part-short Soviet MiG-25s and French Mirage F-1s—neither of which is any match for increasingly sophisticated U.S. aircraft. And Saddam has failed to shoot down any manned American aircraft in the ten years American pilots have been patrolling the northern and southern no-fly zones.

In fact, as U.S. military strength has grown in recent years, Iraq's has deteriorated. Iraq's army now is just one-third the

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size it was when it invaded Kuwait in 1990. Even the Republican Guard units are understaffed and underequipped. On December 31, 2000, for instance, Saddam presided over a four-hour Baghdad military parade. Reuters described how "the parade displayed sophisticated surface-to-surface and anti-aircraft missiles, artillery and more than 1,000 modern, Russian-made tanks as well as infantry units." But Michael Eisenstadt, a military analyst for The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, watched footage of the parade and made a startling observation: Some of the showcased vehicles were actually captured Kuwaiti equipment repainted by the Iraqi army (the Kuwaitis purchased a variant of the T-72 tank that the Iraqis had not). Far from being the new, refurbished army Saddam sought to portray, the showcase of decade-old captured Kuwaiti armor highlighted how decrepit Saddam's military really is. Equipment not looted by Saddam's government was little better. "Most of the vehicles on display appeared to be old, beat-up Iraqi inventory," says Eisenstadt. "You could see the wear on the road wheels and fenders in the close-up shots." And if Saddam's troops lack equipment, they also lack training. As Patrick Clawson, editor of the forthcoming study *Iraq After Saddam*, comments, "Urban warfare is a specialized skill which takes a lot of training to learn. And I know of no evidence that Saddam has allowed Iraqi soldiers into the cities to practice this skill. Indeed, given how paranoid Saddam is about allowing his troops anywhere near Baghdad, I would be surprised to see Iraqi soldiers practicing how to fight street by street." Egypt's former Chief of Staff General Salah Halaby put it more bluntly earlier this month: "The Iraqi army has no chance whatsoever to stand steadfast and will fall like a castle of sand."

Even with such predictions, of course, no one can be sure what will happen if the United States goes to war. But given the danger of allowing Saddam to continue pursuing a nuclear bomb, the current Iraq debate is all about relative risk. And there's good reason to believe that the risk of taking on Saddam is—thankfully—far lower than the skeptics would have us believe. ■

Erskine Bowles and the politics of anti-personality.

Personality Test

By JASON ZENGERLE

ERSKINE BOWLES LIKES to say that he is not a politician—which might seem strange considering that he's running to replace Jesse Helms as a U.S. senator from North Carolina. But watching Bowles campaign at a nursing home outside of Greensboro one recent summer morning, it was easy to understand his oft-repeated disclaimer. Several dozen seniors were gathered in the facility's dreary dining room, more than a couple of them nodding off despite the breakfast cleanup loudly taking place in the adjoining kitchen. It was not an auspicious setting for a campaign stop, and as the event's starting time drew near I waited for someone to prepare the room for the candidate's arrival. But no one did: At the appointed time, with no fanfare, Bowles walked into the room. He didn't pause to shake any hands or even wave; he just made a beeline for the podium, told a brief anecdote about his mother—"who's in a facility just like this"—and launched into his prepared speech. Those who were sleeping did not stir; the noise from the kitchen did not let up.

But if Bowles doesn't work a room like a typical pol, he does have some other things going for him in his Senate campaign. First there's his political résumé. Although the 57-year-old Democrat has never held elected office, he spent much of the 1990s in Washington as a member of the Clinton administration—part of it serving as White House

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chief of staff. Then there's his money. Before going to Washington, Bowles was a successful businessman, founding an investment-banking firm in Charlotte and accumulating a net worth that, in a February filing with the Senate, he estimated was between $31.3 million and $71.5 million. Finally there's his name. Bowles hails from a prominent North Carolina family: His late father, Hargrove "Skipper" Bowles Jr., a flamboyant businessman turned politician who ran as the Democratic nominee for governor in 1972, is still remembered fondly by many older North Carolinians. All of which means that when Tar Heel Democrats go to the polls on September 10 for their long-delayed primary (it was originally scheduled for May but was postponed because of a redistricting dispute), Bowles is considered the overwhelming favorite to win.

STILL, BOWLES WILL be a decided underdog in the November general election. That's because his Republican opponent will almost certainly be Elizabeth Dole. Dole lived in Washington, D.C., for more than three decades and didn't move back to her home state to run for the Senate until last year. (She now claims her 101-year-old mother's home in Salisbury as her official residence.) Since her return she's conducted one of the most issue-less campaigns in recent memory—emphasizing her biography and personality in campaign appearances and dodging not only the press but even her opponents. But none of that has seemed to matter, as North Carolinians have greeted her with open arms. In the most recent public poll, conducted by the Dole campaign in July, she led Bowles 61 percent to 29 percent. Indeed, as Dole has campaigned, she's been treated more like a celebrity on the scale of Oprah or Kathie Lee—hounded for autographs and asked to pose for snapshots—than a mere candidate. "This is one of those once-in-a-lifetime things," a GOP county chair gushed to *USA Today* on the occasion of Dole's visit to his neck of the woods.

Bowles knows that he cannot compete with Dole's star power, so he's going in the opposite direction, downplaying his personality and talking up the issues. On the day I saw him at the nursing home, the issue was that old Democratic standby, prescription drugs. Bowles is a tall man with combed-back black hair and deeply tanned skin. But as he droned on about prescription-drug prices—"Here in North Carolina ... the cost of Prevacid would be one hundred and forty-two dollars and twelve cents. The exact same drug in [Canada, Italy, and Germany] would be fifty-seven dollars and ninety-one cents"—he seemed to blend into his dreary surroundings. After about 20 more minutes of talking about prescription-drug prices—Bowles went on to compare the costs of Celebrex and Lipitor in North Carolina to their costs overseas—he offered to take questions. For a few uncomfortable moments no one in the audience stirred: Bowles had either stunned those who were awake with his mastery of policy minutia—or he'd bored *them* to sleep.

Bowles's self-consciously substantive, unflashy campaign—the mirror opposite of Dole's experiment in content-less political celebrity—makes for an interesting retroactive test case. Ever since Al Gore lost to George W. Bush, some Democrats have maintained that if Gore had just campaigned as the smarter, more engaged candidate that he actually was—instead of masking his superior intellect and experience in a bid to look as much a "regular guy" as Bush—he, rather than W., would now be in the White House. This is the operating premise of the ongoing presidential campaign on the TV show "The West Wing," the alternative political universe that Aaron Sorkin has constructed for disaffected Democrats. As Sorkin has imagined it (and as he told *The New Yorker* in March), the Nobel Laureate President Josiah Bartlet will try to beat his Republican challenger, the not-so-sharp Florida Governor Robert Ritchie, by making the "election about smart and stupid, about engaged and not, qualified and not." In TVland this gambit will undoubtedly work. (The show's ratings are too high for its stars to be voted out of the White House just yet.) But in the real world, the Sorkin strategy isn't so surefire. While it might be nice to think that smarter, more engaged candidates really do win elections, sometimes personality and presentation matter most—as Erskine Bowles is finding out.

AS CLINTON'S CHIEF of staff, Bowles had ample exposure to one of the era's great natural politicians. But long before he worked for Clinton, he worked for another natural: his father, Skipper Bowles. A combustible blend of charisma and ambition, Skipper Bowles had risen from humble origins in the small farm town of Monroe to become, by the mid-'50s, one of the most successful businessmen in North Carolina, amassing a fortune from a string of successful grocery, jewelry, and real estate ventures. In 1960 an up-and-coming young Democrat named Terry Sanford asked Bowles to be the chief fund-raiser for his gubernatorial campaign; when Sanford was elected he appointed Bowles director of the state's Department of Conservation and Development. It was traditionally a low-profile job, but not for Bowles, who traveled all over the United States—and sometimes the world—trying to lure businesses to North Carolina. He even used his post to score a high-profile civil rights victory, ordering the integration of state parks. For a flamboyant extrovert like Bowles, the limelight afforded by politics proved irresistible: After the Sanford administration ended, Bowles won a seat in the state legislature and set his eyes on the governor's mansion.

In 1972 he ran. Touting his business success but declaring that he was "no aloof stuffed shirt," Bowles barnstormed across the state. "He loved to get out and press the flesh," recalls Roy Parker Jr., a longtime North Carolina newspaperman who served as Bowles's campaign press secretary. When Bowles won the Democratic Primary in a runoff, it looked like the governor's job was his. After all, in North Carolina, as in most Southern states, Democrats had enjoyed the fruits of one-party government since the end of Reconstruction. But after the tumult of the '60s, white Southerners were gravitating toward the GOP, and old Southern Democratic

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stalwarts were starting to fall by the wayside: In 1970 Albert Gore Sr. lost his Senate seat in Tennessee. And George McGovern's presence at the top of the national ticket made 1972 a particularly tough year for Southern Democrats; that November, Richard Nixon's coattails were long enough in North Carolina to carry Republican gubernatorial candidate Jim Holshouser (along with the GOP's U.S. Senate candidate, a TV commentator named Jesse Helms) to victory. Skipper Bowles never ran for office again; when he died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in 1986, his obituaries noted that he was the first Democrat to lose the North Carolina governor's race in the twentieth century.

Erskine Bowles was 27 when his father lost, and he witnessed it firsthand: He had quit a job at Morgan Stanley in New York to move back to North Carolina to work on the campaign. The experience seemed to sour the younger Bowles on the public sector. "I don't think he ever had a good taste for politics after his dad lost that gubernatorial race," says Jim Compton, who has known Bowles since they were both children growing up in Greensboro. Unlike the young son of another vanquished Southern Democrat, Albert Gore Jr.—who was elected to the House of Representatives only six years after *his* father's defeat—Bowles did not seek to run for office himself. Instead he returned to the world of business, founding an investment-banking firm in Charlotte, where he stayed until the early '90s, when Clinton (à la Terry Sanford with Skipper Bowles three decades earlier) came calling for campaign cash. After Clinton was elected president, Bowles followed him to Washington, serving first as the director of the Small Business Administration and then in the White House.

BUT WHEREAS SKIPPER used his government job as a public stage, Erskine stayed out of the spotlight. In contrast to his predecessor as White House chief of staff, Leon Panetta, Bowles mostly steered clear of the Sunday-morning talk shows. Instead he fashioned himself as a deal maker, taking the most satisfaction from the 1997 balanced-budget agreement he negotiated with congressional Republicans on behalf of the president. "Erskine's previous life was as an investment banker, and investment bankers act as agents for companies," says Nelson Schwab, a friend and former business partner. "They tend to be more behind-the-scenes than out front."

Bowles's style has made him a very reluctant candidate for elected office. When he left Washington in 1998, a number of North Carolina Democrats urged him to run for governor in 2000. But after a brief flirtation, he declined. The same dynamic initially played out last year when Tar Heel Democrats tried and failed to persuade Bowles to run for the Senate in 2002. But last fall Bowles changed his mind about the Senate race and declared that he would run. His stated reason was September 11: Bowles was in New York on the day of the attacks and, for several hours that morning, could not find one of his sons who worked only a few blocks from the World Trade Center. "Everything's changed for me," Bowles said when he announced his candidacy in October. "My aversion to being a politician is not important. I want to spend all of my time in public service."

Of course, overcoming that aversion was easier with Jesse Helms out of the picture. When Bowles had initially decided against a Senate bid in May of last year, Helms was still planning to run. But, three months later Helms announced that he would retire when his fifth Senate term ended in 2003. In North Carolina, Democrats have fared well in off-year Senate races, when turnout is low and there are no coattails from the GOP presidential candidate (who has not lost the state since 1976). But Helms had always been an exception to this rule: In fact, he's the only North Carolina Republican to have won an off-year Senate race this century. With Helms's retirement, the advantage in this year's Senate race seemed to shift to the Democrats. Especially since Dole, who threw her hat into the ring after Helms bowed out, was coming off a disastrous presidential campaign and (to Democrats at least) didn't seem ready for prime time. "She's just such a perfectionist," one Democrat close to Bowles crowed in March. "I think before this is all done she's going to crack!"

But Dole hasn't cracked. In fact, so far she's run a brilliant if utterly cynical campaign. Taking full advantage of her celebrity status—which means that voters pay attention to her even when she's not doing anything attention-worthy—Dole has largely steered clear of the press, usually taking only softball questions and sometimes abruptly ending interviews when the queries get tough. She has also avoided taking solid positions on sensitive issues, preferring instead to talk in generalities or focus on issues where there isn't really any debate. Or she does both at the same time, as she did in late July when, in what her campaign billed as a major policy announcement, she declared: "We need an all-out revival of our crusade to rid America of illegal drugs. ... I will be a champion for this cause." In effect, Dole's Senate campaign is an extended version of her 1996 Republican National Convention speech: Instead of strolling around a convention hall for a half-hour with a relentless smile and an ample supply of platitudes, she's doing it for a whole year across an entire state.

ALL OF WHICH is driving the Bowles campaign a little bit batty. Bowles's aides and supporters routinely complain that the press is giving Dole a free ride. (In truth, the North Carolina press has been pretty hard on Dole; it's the voting public that doesn't seem to care.) And they bemoan the fact that the long delay in holding the primary means that Bowles will only have two months, instead of six, to run directly against her. "I think once you get Erskine and Dole head-to-head, it'll become clear who the superior candidate is," says one Bowles adviser. "But we'll have to move fast after the primary."

Bowles has actually gotten a head start—virtually ignoring his two main opponents in the Democratic primary, State Representative Dan Blue and Secretary of State Elaine Marshall, and instead training all of his firepower on Dole.

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Bowles has hammered away at Dole for wanting to privatize Social Security and for her vague positions on other issues. "What she hasn't said is what she's really for," Bowles has complained. He has also frequently pointed out that Dole did not live in North Carolina for 44 years. Indeed, Bowles's entire campaign can be interpreted as a not particularly subtle critique of Dole; his just-the-issues approach is designed to highlight Dole's issue-less one.

AFTER HIS SPEECH at the nursing home, I interviewed Bowles in one of the facility's small meeting rooms. Seated in the cramped space and sipping water from a plastic cup, he was a world away from an executive suite in Charlotte or a West Wing office in Washington, and I asked him how he liked being a politician. "You know I've said so many times, 'I'm not a politician, I don't plan to become one, and I still don't feel like a politician,'" he insisted. "I think you see that when I go somewhere I try to answer all the questions, the hard ones, the easy ones, no matter what they are. I feel like I'm just being myself; and hopefully, you know, when people get a chance to see who you are and what you are and whether you're real and genuine, they'll decide whether or not to vote for you."

Bowles is hardly the first candidate to trumpet his authenticity. But normally, as was the case with George W. Bush, candidates display their authenticity by flaunting their simplicity and anti-intellectualism. If they're not really simplistic and anti-intellectual (e.g., Al Gore), they feign authenticity by pretending they are. For Bowles though—who, unlike Gore, spent most of his adult life actively avoiding politics—it's just the opposite: His authenticity stems from his refusal to dumb things down or act folksy. Sometimes he takes this to annoying extremes, as when he makes a big deal of refusing his aides' advice that he wear contacts rather than his distinctively dorky clear-framed glasses. "I'm not going to change what I am," he told me at the nursing home, "just like I'm not going to change my glasses." He's also too fond of the self-deprecating remark. "When Madeleine Albright came down here," he recounted, "she said, 'You know, Erskine can't dance as good as Jesse Helms, and he's not as pretty as John Edwards, but, you know, he's a really smart, good guy who I know really cares and can get things done.'"

But Bowles's emphasis on authenticity also allows him to speak in refreshingly blunt terms. When I asked him about whether Dole's campaign is issue-less and too centered on her personality, he answered exasperatedly: "Look, she is what she is. And if this campaign is going to be about going around and making a little forty-five-minute speech and then going to the next town and sending your husband out to do something similar"—Bob Dole is now making appearances on his wife's behalf around North Carolina—"if that's what it's going to be, then she may win. But I think if it's about the issues and where we stand on the issues and who knows the most about North Carolina and who's actually done the most for North Carolina and who can do the most and really will care the most about North Carolina, then I think I'll win." Bowles is also unusually frank about the contrast between his experience in the Clinton administration and Dole's decidedly undistinguished tenures as Transportation secretary under President Ronald Reagan and Labor secretary under the first President Bush. "I think the job I had in Washington, as compared to any of the positions she's had, will enable me to really get something done," he told me. "As White House chief of staff, on a daily basis you deal with health care issues, welfare issues, taxation, budget, the environment, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, the Mideast—and then you have lunch."

THE DOWNSIDE TO this candor, of course, is that it also makes Bowles seem haughty, the "aloof stuffed shirt" his father was not. Bowles has some of the businessman's disdain for Washington. Even when he worked in the White House, Bowles pasted on his office wall a *New Yorker* cartoon showing a man in hell. The caption read: "On the other hand, it's great to be out of Washington." And that disdain can be rather unattractive. After all, it's hardly clear (especially in the current cultural environment) that being an investment banker is any better than being a politician. Indeed, even Aaron Sorkin seems to recognize that if a candidate is going to run on authenticity, that candidate's authentic self had better be pretty appealing. While "The West Wing"'s President Bartlet does have a bit of a snotty streak, he's also witty and charismatic and inspirational.

At some level Bowles seems to understand this. So in spite of his disdain for the more superficial aspects of campaigning, he is trying his best to engage in them. On the Fourth of July he took part in an Independence Day parade in Greensboro. Standing in the bed of a vintage Chevy pickup that had been decorated with campaign signs, miniature bowling pins, and big cardboard glasses frames and christened the "Bowles Mobile," the candidate hammed it up. He hooted and waved and looked on with satisfaction as some children who joined him for the ride chanted, "Go Erskine" and threw candy to the onlookers lining the parade route. When a man holding a baby girl approached him, Bowles not only accepted the man's proffered hand and vigorously shook it; he leaned over, put his face up to the baby's, and planted a big kiss on her cheek. "Mmmmmmum!" Bowles smacked his lips for effect.

But as soon as the parade ended so did Bowles's ham act. He promptly jumped off the truck, and his smile turned into a slight frown. As the candidate stood by himself in an empty parking lot, I sidled up and asked how he'd liked the parade. "Oh, it was great!" he said a bit too enthusiastically, his mouth instantly going into a big, forced grin. "This is the fun part. All the other stuff is work. This is just being with people." But as Bowles continued to talk, his smile once again faded. "Well, for me it's a little embarrassing having my name up there," he confessed, gesturing at the "Bowles Mobile." "I've been to parades before," he went on, "but I always just ran alongside or threw candy." Shrugging his shoulders and letting out a small sigh, he added, "I just hope I never get used to this." ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

French Interiors

POSSIBLY EXCEPTING THE Germans, French film-makers have always been the ones most intent on using the medium impossibly—to address ideas as ideas, through an art that is otherwise designed. Hundreds of films around the world have carried intellectual weight and worth, but usually those films are dramas or comedies whose characters happen to be intellectually fraught. It is hard to imagine a country other than France producing many such films as Erick Zonca's *The Dreamlife of Angels* or Laurent Cantet's *Time Out*, in which, though the characters are far from puppets, they present matters of which they are examples. Of course there is a fine line here, not a blunt border: Hamlet is unmistakably individual, yet if he didn't represent themes that involve us, he wouldn't be interesting. Still, that fine line sometimes shades over, especially in French films, so that we are gripped more by the subject than by the characters.

Anne Fontaine has directed one of "those" French films, **How I Killed My Father** (New Yorker), which she wrote with Jacques Fieschi, author of *Sade* and *A Heart in Winter*. Fontaine's last film of note was *Dry Cleaning*, in which a transvestite man affects the lives of a modest small-town couple and modes of moral judgment are scrutinized. Her new film is also about an intruder affecting a couple, except that this time the intruder is the husband's long-absent father and the milieu is glittering,

Jean-Luc is a gerontologist, forty, with a lucrative practice. He lives in a princely Versailles château with his wife—no children, as she (he says) would run physical risk in childbearing. A letter comes to Jean-Luc telling him that his father, also a doctor, who deserted his family thirty years ago to practice in Africa, is dead. Then, on the night of a dazzling party at the château, the father, Maurice, suddenly appears. Quiet, unannounced.

This is only the first of the film's contradictions. (Possibly the letter was intended to give Maurice some of the aura of a revenant.) But the central point of the film is to follow the effect of a father's latter-day presence on all the arrangements of Jean-Luc's life—marriage, mistresses, brother whom he employs as a factotum (and who also does comedy at a small local club). What Fontaine and Fieschi are after as writers is, as the title announces, an investigation of delicacies and dangers in the fundamental Freudian relationship of father and son, the inherent bonds and resentments. These are all tinted by the fact that Maurice and Jean-Luc's wife become quite fond of each other—nonsexually, but still there are hints of regret that Maurice's age made this so.

The film as a whole is a set of attractive dissatisfactions. None of its implications is thoroughly plumbed, but they are all so confidently presented by Fontaine and her cast that they almost make us feel that our understanding is at fault. Charles Berling, who was the husband in *Dry Cleaning*, gives Jean-Luc a frigid composure that seems deliberate, perfected. Natacha Régnier makes his wife a woman who sees herself as an upholstered accomplice to his manner, powerless but insouciant. The key performance is by Michel Bouquet as Maurice. Garlanded with the benefits of a long career, Bouquet infuses the man with that wonderful double strength: knowledge of life and of acting, one authenticating the other.

Fontaine's direction, especially her agreeably startling use of close-ups and her grace with a moving camera, creates sheerly cinematic appeal. She ends with one more enigma. The very last shot is an aerial view of an African village, the sort of place where Maurice has spent his life, and just before that shot we get a hint that the whole film might be a flashback. So she closes a film of psychological ambiguities with a formal ambiguity, together with a last bow to Maurice. Not many of us will want to spend the rest of our lives trying to plumb those ambiguities: still, the basic trauma, the stirrings made by a father's presence in a family where he has not existed, keeps resonating in some echo chamber.

Another father-son matter, though not a thematic one. Jesse Peretz, who made **The Château** (IFC), is the son of this magazine's editor-in-chief. That fact did not constrain me from praising the first film by Peretz *fils*, called *First Love, Last Rites*, and now I must praise not only his talent but his range. *First Love* steamed with infatuation and sex in Louisiana. *The Château* is high jinks in France.

Peretz apparently wanted to make a clash-of-cultures comedy about Americans in Europe but did not want the usual Yanks in Hawaiian shirts, laden with cameras. So he and his story collaborator, Thomas Bidegain, chose two bright American brothers, Graham and Rex—young men. (Youngness, rather than mere youth, is essential to the piece.) Not only that, Rex is black, adopted by Graham's family. Not only *that*, the brothers have suddenly inherited a French château—from a remote great-uncle.

The château is grand but grotty; the resident staff of four (plus a child) are either hostile or aloof; but the sheer adventure that they are in tickles the young men. Graham has been leading some sort of fringe life; Rex is a successful Internet businessman. They react to the inheritance in character, and their ebullience about what has happened to them keeps the picture frothing along. There are some plot developments *de rigueur*. The brothers decide to sell the château, which scares the staff who have been there all their lives, and the ways in which the servants discourage prospective buyers are reminders of Sid Caesar sketches. But what the film is mainly concerned with is the high spirits of Graham and the almost equally high spirits of Rex, though his are tempered because he cannot sense a heritage. Both of them are attracted to the young maid of the house, which leads not to rivalry but to comparisons in approach.

Paul Rudd, bespectacled, as Graham has a scene in which he attempts to kiss the maid but pulls himself back just in time, rebuking himself hilariously. Romany Malco, as Rex, also has a scene with the maid, in which he doesn't say—quite eloquently—a great deal more than he says. Didier Flamand endows the butler with an air of secrets to come. Sylvie Testud, a *jolie laide*, is wistful as the somewhat bewildered maid. Peretz says that he and Bidegain provided a story, then let the actors improvise the dialogue. Considering their actors, this was a sound decision, nicely in keeping with the picture's

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brio. The Americans especially, riffing along, keep the pleasantly fabricated story bouncing.

The resolution of the plot is a bit cryptic. But we understand that the film we have been watching is like the video of a free-floating party, except that it is smartly directed and breezily played. That's enough. That's plenty. Further: if I have the chance to review another Jesse Peretz film, I'm resolved not to mention his father. The son also rises. ■

Martin Filler on Architecture

More Than Zero

For those of us who believe that architecture is an unfailingly accurate mirror of a society's values, the current state of the proposed redevelopment of Ground Zero offers the most graphic evidence of how little things have changed in this country since September 11, 2001. This is not due, of course, to a lack of attempted involvement by the public in general or the architectural profession in particular. Long before the ruins of the World Trade Center stopped burning, obscenely opportunistic architects began pushing themselves forward for the big job that had opened up with the ground beneath the Twin Towers. The unlucky new lessee of the buildings, Larry Silverstein (who closed on his deal just six weeks before the fatal day), had already contacted Skidmore, Owings & Merrill before the attacks to spiff up the Trade Center so he could attract classier tenants. In the aftermath, Silverstein asked SOM to rebuild 7 World Trade Center (which he had developed and which also fell on September 11) and to come up with ideas for the reconstruction of the entire complex, which is his contractual right. It was assumed in many quarters that the big commission would also go to SOM. But not so fast.

Given public indifference to city planning schemes in the United States in recent years, it must have been something of a shock to the business-as-usual crowd when it became clear that a groundswell of support was rising in favor of an architecturally meaningful and spiritually consoling design. Five days before he left office in December, Rudolph Giuliani spurred the public debate by calling—with the nothing-to-lose candor of the nonincumbent—for "a soaring, monumental, beautiful memorial." He remains the only public official to have spoken out forcefully against the redevelopment debacle that was already beginning to unfold.

Soon everyone wanted to get in on the act. The New York art dealer Max Protetch (who sells modern architectural drawings) self-promotingly solicited what masqueraded as serious proposals for the WTC site, though his ensuing exhibition amounted to a repugnantly stylish series of meaningless renderings by a lineup of the usual trendy suspects. Among the more than sixty participants, Daniel Libeskind offered a spiky Deconstructivist spire, Zaha Hadid whipped up one of her typically unintelligible angular agonies, and Hans Hollein made an appalling joke by bridging the roofs of the resurrected Twin Towers with a colossal Oldenburgian assault rifle.

Some months later *The New Yorker* asked nine artists to imagine a WTC memorial: serious fun, as the Mostly Mozart ads used to say. The deeply unfunny Art Spiegelman knocked off Peter Eisenman's forthcoming Berlin Holocaust memorial with a serried field of 110 one-story Twin Tower replicas on the site of each 110-story structure, "multiplied like those brooms in *Fantasia*," Spiegelman explained. At least the Disneyfying impulse was overt. The only proposal with any real merit was the sculptor Elyn Zimmerman's dignified minimalist reflecting pools marking the footprints of the lost buildings.

And on September 8 we are to be treated by *The New York Times Magazine* to its own vision for Ground Zero as imag-

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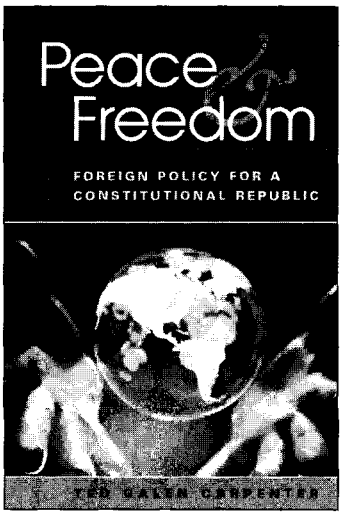

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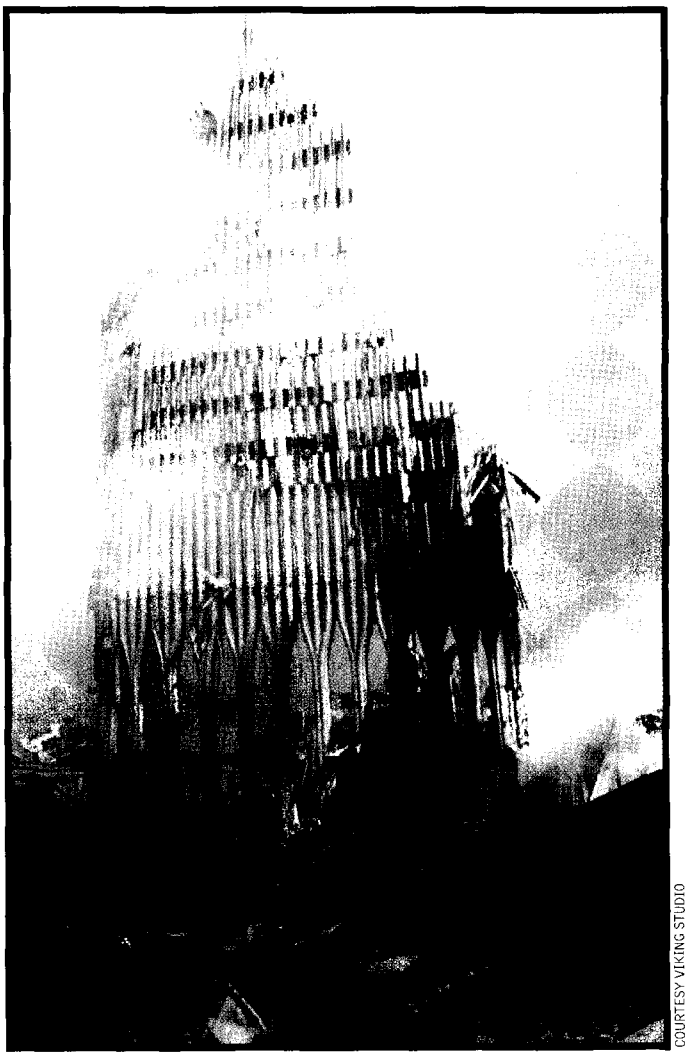
ined by an all-star team selected by Herbert Muschamp, the paper's erratic and ethically challenged architecture critic. Among the participants are said to be such predictable brand names as Peter Eisenman and Richard Meier, second-raters such as Charles Gwathmey and Rafael Viñoly, and a few thoughtful mid-career figures such as Fred Schwartz (who has already proposed moving the bulk of the construction to a newly built-over West Street, west of the WTC site) and Steven Holl (though his silly entry in the Protetch show, for what seemed like freestanding, Trade Center–height elevator shafts wrapped with a diagonal extrusion of enclosed space snaking up around them, does not prompt much hope). According to *The New York Observer*, "Sources said that the architects have grumbled about having very little technical information about the site. Following contentious meetings with Muschamp," the paper reported, "some members of *The Times*'s design panel have wanted to withdraw altogether."



COURTESY VIKING STUDIO

BUT FAR MORE troublesome than these wishful gestures flimsily tethered to reality were the six all-too-real designs for the WTC site that were unveiled in July by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation), which was established by Governor George Pataki soon after the catastrophe. The authorship of the half-dozen schemes was at first fudged, with the designers' names omitted from the initial public announcement of the uniformly depicted schemes. Always beware an unsigned architectural design. Only later were four of them identified as the work of Beyer Blinder Bell (the esteemed preservation firm responsible for two of its own versions, plus revisions of plans that originated at SOM and Cooper Robertson & Partners). The two other schemes, by Peterson Littenberg Architects, were the most well-received of the lot and led the LMDC to hire the firm to produce a master plan for lower Manhattan.

As is now well known, the six alternatives were all more or less dreadful, and were harshly and rightfully denounced by the architecture critic of the *Times* and by its editorial page. But institutional back-pedaling at the paper quickly ensued, with a front-page subhead chiding, "Clamor for Fresh Visions of Ground Zero Could Delay Lower Manhattan's Recovery," and, the day after that, an article titled "Even Critics Say Some Designs For Downtown Aren't So Bad." But they are so bad, they really are. Like some pathetic 1960s urban renewal project in a backwater, the awkwardly clustered groupings of high-rise towers were (as the LMDC defensively demurred) only conceptual matrixes around which to focus analysis and debate. To many observers, however, it was the same baloney sliced six different ways. And the sham public "forum" trumped up shortly thereafter at the Javits Center to allow average citizens to voice their opinions deceived no seasoned observers of how large-scale development in New York actually proceeds. The process looked like democracy, but it smelled like money.

The fault lies not with the hapless architects who were asked to dress up this pig of a project, but with the clients themselves, most notably the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. It holds title to the land under the now-vanished structures on which the developer Silverstein holds a ninety-nine-year lease. Loath to stem any of the considerable revenue stream that the WTC poured into its coffers, the Port Authority insisted that the redevelopment schemes replace virtually all thirteen million square feet lost in the Twin Towers' destruction. Given that the bulk of the space had been contained in the megalithic superstructures, it does not take an architecture expert to understand that if you redistribute the same quantity of volume in considerably shorter, safer buildings—deemed prudent by all concerned—then more ground will have to be covered. And because of the considerable—and to my mind justifiable—public pressure to leave the footprints of the towers vacant (a central demand of the missing victims' families and a feature of four of the six LMDC schemes), the gross overcrowding of the site is inevitable.

In purely economic terms, it would be sheer madness to try to replicate the vast amount of office space that existed in the Twin Towers. The long cycles of boom and bust that characterize property development can take decades to adjust to the forces of supply and demand. There were already millions of square feet of unoccupied commercial real estate in lower Manhattan before Al Qaeda struck, and the recession that the attacks exacerbated has not helped matters one bit. What is truly scandalous, then, in light of the supposedly transformed country in which we have been living since September 11, is how brazenly greedy the Port Authority has been in insisting that it wring every last dollar out of the rebuilding. This is nothing other than war profiteering. In an abject age in which cash-and-carry commercialism disfigures almost every aspect of our public life, this shameful grab proves that even at the mouth of hell the buck still rules.

Although the Port Authority is not directly answerable to the electorate, the governors of the two states controlling it are. No doubt once George Pataki is (almost certainly) returned to office in November, he will reveal his hand. Despite his some-

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what clueless personal affect, this cunning politician has so packed the LMDC with people beholden to him that the ultimate direction of the project will be his to decide. American memory could scarcely have been placed in less competent hands.

The embarrassment of the Port Authority's rapacious commercial appetite is too much for some New York officials to bear, and behind-the-scenes maneuverings to avoid an outcome that will only compound the initial disaster are under way. One gambit is to swap the sixteen-acre WTC site for an equal amount of land under New York's two major airports, to give the city autonomy in determining the future of Ground Zero. (Governor Jim McGreevy of New Jersey, the supposed equal of Pataki on the Port Authority, wants Newark Airport cut in on the action as well; because each governor holds veto power over the other, he is likely to get his way.) Such a deal would also, serendipitously, get rid of the unimaginative Silverstein, a solution that the insurers of the Twin Towers are said to embrace eagerly, not least because he is extortionately insisting to be reimbursed for each tower as a separate disaster occurrence, thus doubling the underwriters' liability. (The matter is set for trial in November.) The shock of learning that there was looting at the WTC site in the days after the disaster obviously has not stopped the looting from continuing.

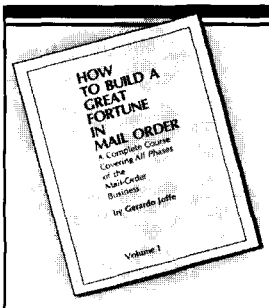
ANOTHER RESPONSE TO the outcry against the horrible half-dozen proposals was the hasty decision by the LMDC to hold an international design competition for the World Trade Center site, to be paid for by the LMDC, rather than by the Port Authority, which sponsored most of the initial schemes. To be announced at the end of September, the shortlist is likely to include the standard high-style gang whose names inevitably pop up in such contexts. You can bet that Norman Foster and Renzo Piano will be among them, both for their large-scale urban planning experience as well as their safe balance between modern stylistic acceptability and old-fashioned developer-friendliness. But though the small-scale work of both can be superb, their big civic projects leave much to be desired.

Rem Koolhaas, the author a few decades ago of the heady polemic *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* and now the most overexposed architect since Frank Gehry, is likely to be the token avant-garde contestant. He has already declared his interest, helpfully reminding *The New York Post*: "I seem to be one of the few architects who liked enormously the World Trade Center itself. I was a kind of out-and-out admirer of [the towers], and I have always defended them." Self-serving though that tribute to Minoru Yamasaki's behemoths may sound, Koolhaas has indeed always indulged a perverse weakness for Nelson Rockefeller's most bombastic architectural boondoggles, particularly those designed by his court architect Wallace K. Harrison, to whose chilly 1950s-style urbanism he paid homage in his retrograde master plan for the French city of Lille.

Perhaps Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, lost in the shuffle at this point, will now be able to reassert itself, and could well be chosen as the conservative counterbalance to the achingly hip Koolhaas. And though Frank Gehry has not had much luck in New York—losing the *Times* headquarters competition to Piano and watching his and Thomas Krens's grandiose plans for a downtown Guggenheim tank with the economy—his status as international architecture's regnant superstar might win him a place on the roster. This universally coveted job has instantly become the Getty of the new millennium, irresistible in its symbolic significance (and its lucrative potential), but it is similarly fraught with peril to the winner's career, as Meier found out with the last "commission of the century."

SEVERAL VOICES OF reason have lately cut through the babble with admirable clarity and common sense, suggesting how we might better proceed in dealing with the WTC site. In a well-argued op-ed piece in the *Times*, Denise Scott Brown urged the opposite of the sweeping "perfect vision" schemes characteristic of postwar urban renewal projects and implicit in the six LMDC proposals. Taking cues from how a place is already used, she wrote, is a much more reliable guide to how it will ultimately function than any superimposed grand design. Thus Scott Brown wisely advocated a slower, more incremental approach to the redevelopment, one that puts particular emphasis on improving the several transportation nodes that converge around the site and providing support for the small start-up businesses that tend to revitalize languishing neighborhoods.

The truth be told, the World Trade Center was neither a very good work of architecture nor a very successful piece of urbanism. Its shortcomings were somewhat mitigated by the westward and southward expansion of the World Financial Center and Battery Park City during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the 1980s. They brought a more humane scale to the area, and created an enlivening connection with the waterfront; and if they, too, were rather lackluster architecturally, at least they succeeded in social terms in creating much-needed spaces for activities more beneficial than mergers and acquisitions.

But the impetus to rebuild quickly—to prove to the terrorists that they have not won, as the propaganda is sure to go—will be difficult to resist. As the massive, hurried, and thoroughly botched post-reunification development of Berlin has demonstrated, it is a momentous mistake to try to do too much too soon in the reconstruction of big cities. They best evolve organically as the outgrowth of natural social and economic responses; and the flexibility that Scott Brown urges be applied to lower Manhattan is a sound endorsement of that view. Ground Zero, after all, is no Rotterdam or Dresden or Hiroshima in need of a comprehensive rebuilding. This apocalyptically excised chunk of New York calls for reintegration, not for separation; and the former can be achieved whether the site is left entirely as a sacred precinct or partially returned to something approaching its former density.

BY FAR THE most cogent set of recommendations advanced in the past year of intense debate over the fate of Ground Zero is contained in a small book by Mike Wallace called *A New Deal for New York*, published this month by his Gotham Center for New York History and Bell & Weiland. Wallace, co-author with Edwin G. Burrows of the magisterial *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, is here as succinct as in his earlier volume he was expansive. In fewer than a hundred hand-sized pages, he outlines specifics for both the WTC site—like Giuliani, he is in favor of it remaining wholly public and non-commercial—and the regeneration of the surrounding metropolis in its entirety.

More importantly, Wallace places the project within its larger regional and national context, delineated with a breadth of historical learning and socio-political insight not seen since Lewis Mumford gave forth his two late-life masterworks, *The Pentagon of Power* and *The Myth of the Machine*, three decades ago. Wallace sees the cogs of an infernal machine much at work here, and the connections that he draws between the profound governmental and corporate corruption we now face in this country and the creation of viable cities are powerful and perfectly timely. He neatly turns the Bush-administration mantra of the past year on its head by pointing out that when it comes to saving our great cities, and downtown New York especially, extreme measures are called for, because "we are, are we not, in a quasi-wartime condition?"

Stressing the need to look beyond September 11 for ways of turning tragedy into triumph, Wallace rejects outright the canard that sufficient financial resources are simply not available to rebuild our cities. "For all our current woes," he wryly points out, "the U.S.A. is not Afghanistan, nor is New York Kabul. This is a rich city, in a rich state, in a rich country. We must therefore reframe the discussion by first asking, 'where's the money *gone*?' " In this scandal-ridden year of executive thievery exposed and the Bush administration's understandable reluctance to probe very deeply into Enron and other corporate con jobs, we are learning the grim answer to Wallace's question.

Wallace decries welfare for the rich not just in its New York incarnation—successive mayors bribing big firms that have no intention of leaving town to remain here nonetheless—but in its broader and more destructive national manifestation, which robs cities and their citizens of their rightful revenues. He urges "a push to replace tax breaks to corporations and the rich, with a massive transfer of federal monies, under reasonable federal guidelines, back to badly strapped states and localities. This could be the source of funding for many of the kinds of projects for which New Yorkers are now calling."

If much of this sounds historically familiar, it is. In his call to common sense, Wallace writes: "We should launch a massive program to create and enhance the nation's social capital—investing in people and resources in a way we haven't done recently but used to do brilliantly. I'm talking about something far greater than the anemic 'stimulus packages' that were bruited about for awhile. What we need, I think, is a new New Deal." Here, many will say, is where Wallace writes himself out of the picture. And he is himself the first to admit that "certainly the fundamentalist Republicans holed up in the House would fight any such initiative to the death. After all, if right-wing Republicans have a core belief (apart from imposing one or another brand of cultural authoritarianism) it's to overthrow what remains of the *old* New Deal." Perceptive historian that he is, Wallace acknowledges that any attempted re-creation of Roosevelt's New Deal would be doomed to failure (as parts of it were the first time around).

What Wallace wants instead is a concerted, high-minded national effort to reverse the past twenty years of faux populism subsumed under the Reaganite imperative to Get Big Guv'm'nt Off Our Backs. To put a finer point on the commonweal's systematic turning away from the common good, he nicely revives the word "privateer," which two centuries ago meant pirate but which he now uses to brand those who assert that wholesale privatization is the best of all possible governance. Wallace is proposing a bold and even quixotic goal, but he is unafraid to insist that the undoing of the New Deal at its best has had dire consequences that the double blow of the terrorist attacks and the recession has only highlighted, not created.

And as sanguine as Wallace is in his specific prescriptions for making lower Manhattan whole again, he is mindful of how larger events could readily endanger any broad-based recovery effort. He cautions that "any number of global developments—another oil embargo, another terror attack, an invasion of Iraq gone bad, a repatriation of European loans, the collapse of important regional economies—might trigger a new downward slide." Though he is no Jeremiah in the vein of Mumford, his Mumfordian view of the city as an organism inextricably linked to larger political and economic forces allows him no other choice. Wallace here returns to the time-honored tradition of the pamphlet, which his predecessor Mumford used to train the attention of *bien pensant* laymen on topics ranging from the threat of Hitler to life in wartime to the specter of nuclear annihilation. This is just what we need now, and Wallace has risen to the occasion splendidly.

AS THIS RAPIDLY changing story continues to evolve in the weeks and months ahead, making many assessments obsolete before they reach print, we will surely be hearing more and more about style once the WTC competition finalists are announced. The presence of publicity-savvy architect-stars will tend to shift attention toward the question of how the rebuilding will look and away from the question of how it will serve the larger issues at stake. But until some determination is made as to the decent limits of commercial profit at Ground Zero, the competition will remain a costume party. Each participant will merely be dressing up a pre-determined bulk of developer-decreed space, a larger-scale and considerably uglier version of the drag show that high-rise office design has been for decades now.

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It is difficult not to be cynical about the probable outcome of this effort. Wallace emphasizes that the New Deal was a New York–born and bred phenomenon: its principal architect had been governor of the state, its chief instigators grew out of the city's vigorous reform movement, and the city served as a proving ground for many programs that were later expanded nationwide. But George Pataki is no Franklin Roosevelt; about this, surely, we can all agree. And nowhere in the noise of this discussion, all the post-September pieties and pontifications notwithstanding, is there anything like the sense of historical urgency that gave the New Deal its writ. I dread to contemplate the dire circumstances that would finally galvanize the populace and its leaders to the kind of purposeful and far-reaching response for which current conditions already cry out, but it may take yet another, even more catastrophic event to prompt us into such morally proportionate action.

Alas, there is no single commanding figure on the horizon to oversee the redevelopment of lower Manhattan, let alone the more thoroughgoing initiatives that Wallace calls for. Architecture and urban design by committee never works. An individual vision is essential, albeit one receptive to the concerns of many. I do not mean an autocrat such as Robert Moses, who was long left to his own devices in New York because he was initially so effective, until his megalomania became so unbridled that it poisoned the quality of his increasingly out-of-control schemes. I have in mind someone such as the late Edward Logue, who as the head of urban development in New Haven, Boston, and New York state for four decades from the 1950s onward exercised a generally benign influence in shepherding huge architectural and infrastructure programs to completion. Though some of his specific projects seem misguided in hindsight, Logue was a champion of affordable urban housing, and he loved architecture and the culture of cities.

The inherent American distrust of the city, stemming from the Jeffersonian ideal of an agrarian republic of small landowners, is at the root of the problem that now confronts New York. But as Wallace bluntly puts it, New York took the hit for the nation as a whole, and it is owed its recompense. What rises from the abyss of Ground Zero will become the most revealing American urban expression of our times. Let us hope that its importance is not lost on those whose own reputations—not in the arts pages but in the history books—will hang in the balance. ■

Fighting Words

By JACKSON LEARS

The Language of War: Literature and Culture in the U.S. From the Civil War Through World War II by James Dawes

(Harvard University Press, 300 pp., $39.95)

"THE REAL WAR," Walt Whitman wrote soon after Appomattox, "will never get in the books." In "The Wound Dresser" and other poems, Whitman tried to transcribe his Civil War experience in a Washington hospital, where he tended the dismembered and the dying. But he sensed that there was something new about the carnage of modern war, something that resisted literary convention and ultimately language itself. He was not alone. The crowds who gathered to hear casualty reports, which had been telegraphed to the metropolitan newspapers, seemed also to realize the incapacity of words to make mass death meaningful. "For the benefit of some who had no papers, one of us read the telegram aloud, while all listened silently and attentively," Whitman recalled. "No remark was made by any of the crowd, which had increased to thirty or forty, but all stood a minute or two, I remember, before they dispers'd. I can almost see them there now, under the lamps at midnight again."

Under those lamps at midnight, a modern sensibility was being born. Whitman was present at the emergence of an important vernacular perspective, one that included modernist writers as well as unlettered citizens. It was a point of view that recognized the horrors of modern war as truly unspeakable, that refused the false comfort of vacant utterance. Its classic expression was in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), when the protagonist Frederic Henry hears a fellow soldier say their comrades could not have died in vain.

> I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory, and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it.... Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates.

This was the modernist recoil from vaporous abstraction, situated amid the mindless slaughter of the Great War. But it was also the infantryman's view of war, juxtaposed against the vapid oratory of staff officers and politicians. And it became the view of some civilians as well. As Paul Fussell observed in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, a distrust of empty verbiage marked the inscriptions on the tombstones at the Somme, not the ones written by Rudyard Kipling but the ones composed by the families of the dead themselves: "In addition to the still hopeful ones about dawn and fleeing shadows, we find some which are more 'modern,' that is, more personal, particular, and hopeless.... And some read as if refusing to play the game of memorial language at all: 'A sorrow too deep for words.'" This vernacular modernism resurfaced in the minimalist vocabulary of ordinary American soldiers during World War II—so many of whom "just had a job to do" and "just didn't want to talk about it" when they returned home. This was more than inarticulateness in the face of the unimaginable; it was also an implicit recognition of the valor of silence.

The modernist disdain for conventional

JACKSON LEARS is editor of *Raritan* and author of *Something for Nothing: Luck in America*, which will be published this winter by Viking.

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pieties had subtle political consequences. To be sure, a rejection of platitudinous patriotism did not require an embrace of absolute pacifism. To acknowledge the grim absurdity of organized violence was not to deny its occasional necessity—even, sometimes, its justice. Yet the modernists' linguistic sobriety, like the veterans' eloquent silence, did imply an important conclusion for public policy debate: that any responsible discussion of modern war must try honestly to confront its concrete actuality. The language of war and the politics of war were intertwined.

JAMES DAWES DISCUSSES their relationship in his new book. As he reminds us, the idea that war is lost in its translation to words can be linked to a larger intellectual tradition—a way of thinking about the relation between language and violence that is embedded in modern liberal thought. From this perspective, language and war are at opposite ends of a continuum. Violence is not only unspeakable; it is what happens when "talks break down." Diplomacy is—almost always—preferable to military action. Talking is the best (and maybe the only) alternative to fighting.

These notions find elaboration and legitimation in liberal political theory, from Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas to the tradition of international law embodied in the Geneva Conventions. That tradition depends on the assumption that language can ultimately master violence, that disputes can be resolved through what Habermas calls "the unforced force of the better argument." Behind this hope lies a powerful faith—some would say a naïve faith—in human rationality.

Alongside the liberal rationalists' "emancipatory model" of language, with its belief in words as instruments for promoting agreement on universal values, Dawes places a "disciplinary model" that defines language as an expression of violence rather than an alternative to it. "The emancipatory model presents force and discourse as mutually exclusive," whereas "the disciplinary model presents the two as mutually constitutive." Dawes aims to press the disciplinary model into the service of the emancipatory model, to deepen and to darken the optimistic vision of liberal rationality by stressing the uses of language as force, without losing the rationalists' faith in language altogether.

His enterprise is clouded from the outset by conceptual confusion. Consider the ambiguity of the word "force." It takes many forms—rhetorical, logical, moral, emotional; and most of these forms can be expressed through language. Dawes knows this, and in the end he deploys this ambiguity to bring the two models together. Yet for most of his book he keeps them apart by presenting the disciplinary model in its most dogmatic and least defensible form. Throughout much of Dawes's account, the disciplinary model simply reduces linguistic force to physical violence, and refuses to acknowledge the distinction between a bureaucratic memorandum and a burst of machine-gun fire. Dawes does little to clarify or even to call attention to this fundamental confusion, and as a consequence his book is enveloped by an oddly unreal atmosphere. It is the rarefied air that one finds on the thirty-sixth floor of the humanities building.

THE IMPULSE TO blur the boundaries between language and violence—between words and deeds, even if sometimes words are deeds—is not simply an academic malady. It has possessed a whole tradition of thinkers whose work has had decidedly non-academic consequences: from Clausewitz the "realist," who defined war as "another form of speech or writing," to Goebbels the propagandist, who showed how language could be manipulated to promote the systematic extermination of an entire people. But in recent decades the discovery that words can wound has acquired a new ideological purpose and a new academic legitimacy. The disciplinary model has emerged in the work of such cultural theorists as Georges Bataille, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Judith Butler, who have defined language as by its very nature a form of coercion.

In the postmodern academy, one does not have to be a Nazi to conflate language and violence. During recent decades this tendency has spread on the cultural left, as an outgrowth of the "Western Marxist" effort to leaven the lump of materialist explanation. How did the ruling class continue to rule? Clearly its success involved the command of language as well as the command of the means of production. Indeed, the devotees of the disciplinary model began to argue that human subjectivity itself was constituted through language—a language over which the human subject had no control. Althusser's concept of "subject interpellation," as Dawes observes, "depicts the individual as constituted through the ideology and language of a culture in much the same way that a pedestrian is hailed and accosted on the street by a police officer." In this formulation, as elsewhere in the disciplinary model, the grain of an insight was engulfed by a relentless reductionism. Yes, language can perform coercive functions for the powerful, but surely it is not reducible to those coercions—nor can they be routinely equated with physical brutality.

Despite those difficulties, the disciplinary model became the norm for left-leaning humanists in the academy. The idea that "words are weapons" justified campaigns against "hate speech" and ever more elaborate definitions of sexual harassment. The language of the seminar room became charged with anomalous melodrama, as Dawes unwittingly demonstrates when he quotes Butler's first-person account of coming into existence through language. It is, she says, a primal trauma. "To be named by another," Butler observes, "is traumatic: it is an act that precedes my will, an act that brings me into a linguistic world in which I might then begin to exercise agency at all. A founding subordination, and yet the scene of agency, is repeated in the ongoing interpellation of social life."

The implications of this passage are revealing and disturbing. It invokes the central poststructuralist maxim, derived from Jacques Derrida—the idea that naming is an act of "originary violence" (to use Derrida's term), the opening move in authority's unending effort to categorize otherness, to de-value difference, to establish hierarchy. There is an important idea here, of course: no thoughtful person would deny the capacity of naming to legitimate unequal power relations, or the pain that systems of classification can inflict on those labeled backward or deviant. But that is hardly the end of the story. Naming can also imply value, dignity, and attachment. Like other linguistic practices, it has multiple meanings depending on historical circumstances; and its complexity mirrors the imperfections and the possibilities of social existence.

In Butler's comments, however, this multiplicity is swept away by a flood of hyperbole and by a simplistic obsession with power. Butler's outrage at "an act that precedes my will" reveals the radical individualism at the heart of so much postmodern thought—the Nietzschean celebration of an almost god-like self. Her description of what amounts to a fall into language seems to me to be merely a fall from fantasies of perfect autonomy into interdependent life as a social being. One is tempted to say, unphilosophically: get over it.

YET THE DISCIPLINARY model involves more than linguistic libertarianism. As Dawes occasionally hints, it derives from other modes of thought that lead in more interesting

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directions. Through the last decade, Butler and other theorists have promoted an emphasis on the "performativity" of language—and, more broadly, on the performance of culture. For the last ten years or so, these ideas have been cropping up everywhere in the academic humanities, especially in cultural studies and queer theory, which depend heavily on the assumption that such categories as race or gender are socially performed rather than biologically given. The philosophical origin of performativity is the work of the Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin, who in a modest little book (actually a posthumously published series of lectures) called *How to Do Things With Words* (1962) argued that under certain circumstances—say, a marriage ceremony—language could have "illocutionary" as well as "perlocutionary" force. That is, it could constitute reality, rather than merely naming or describing it.

One can only imagine the Oxford don's bemusement at the uses to which his ideas have been put. Hugely influential for decades among professional philosophers, Austin's thought has now become hip, the accompaniment to clever bohemian weddings (as reported in the August issue of *Harper's*) as well as to abstruse analyses of cross-dressing. Yet his work has a significance that most interpreters of culture have not sufficiently explored. If it is detached from the reductionist implications of the disciplinary model, the Austinian tradition presents itself as a bracing alternative to positivism. Austin's emphasis on the "illocutionary" force of language allows for more creative interpretations of gestures, incantations, and other cultural expressions that cannot simply be evaluated in terms of their empirical truth or falsity, but that—if they resonate with normative traditions and individual needs—can foster a different kind of truth, an emotional or moral truth. As a number of anthropologists have discovered in their accounts of sacred ritual, the Austinian tradition opens up the possibilities of language beyond the duality of emancipation and discipline. To consider the language of war in this larger context would be to explore the boundaries of poetry and music, to ponder what resources we have when words fail us in their conventional forms, to listen to the voices of silence in their vernacular as well as their modernist versions.

Dawes does not really consider the larger implications of this view of language. His aims are more modest, though still significant. He wants to marry the emancipatory model of language to the disciplinary model, in the cause of counteracting international violence. Disciplinary force, after all, can also be for the good. Dawes admires the commonsense decency of the emancipationist model, its faith in universal values and in the capacity of language to promote agreement on them; but he wants it shorn of its rationalist naïveté and its potential for complicity with status quo power relations. That is where the disciplinary model comes in, to show that performative language can promote the universalist goals of the liberal rationalists. Finally, at the very end of his book, Dawes rescues the disciplinary model from its equation of language and violence. Behind the dogmatic assertions, he finds a more defensible intellectual strain: an emphasis on language as the power to constitute reality, rather than merely to reflect it; a recognition that language can embody violence, but also other more beneficent forms of force—including the moral force of international law.

THE PIVOTAL FIGURE in this endeavor is William James. James's insistence on the pragmatic consequences of thought combined with his radical empiricism to underwrite his belief in the power of belief: if we act as if our convictions are true, that action will contribute to making them true. ("My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will," he wrote in a youthful moment of crisis.) In a thinker without James's tragic sense of "life's bitterer flavors," the belief in belief could degenerate into mere positive thinking. But it could also lead in more fruitful directions, as Dawes's argument suggests.

After many textual detours, *The Language of War* finally enlists James to preside at the marriage of the emancipatory and disciplinary models. Dawes concludes with a Jamesian flourish: "it is the act of treating [moral categories] as real that makes them real." Bringing two warring academic traditions together in the service of a benign ethical aim is surely a worthy goal, a necessary counterpoint to the demented dualisms that plague our intellectual life. And Dawes eventually pulls it off, on his very last page. But the overall effect of the book is unsatisfying: there are too many interesting ideas left barely articulated. Dawes often seems more concerned with demonstrating his erudition than with developing a coherent argument.

A part of the problem is Dawes's crabbed academic style, which rarely allows him to make a straightforward statement. A single example will suffice. It concerns the reason (as if there were only one) why Northern soldiers fought in the Civil War: "As James McPherson reveals," Dawes writes, "Union soldiers of all ranks, ethnicities, and levels of education were motivated to fight because they perceived secession as an unacceptable subversion of the hallowed idea that a generalized communicative consensus buttressed by a verbal artifact could achieve a force equivalent to the physical coercion that attacks monarchy." Whatever this muddle may mean, it is a ludicrously rarefied account of soldiers' motives in wartime. In its wild abstraction, it is a little insulting to the experience of battle.

The literariness of Dawes's approach leads him to focus on a handful of texts, which provide a thin and arbitrarily selective record of "literature and culture" between the Civil War and World War II. It is hard to imagine how any interpretation of the American language of war could ignore the rhetoric of Protestant Christianity, especially its faith in Providence. The idea that the United States has a divinely ordained destiny in the sacred drama of world events has pervaded our public life from the Revolutionary era down to the present, suffusing the language of war—or at least the official language of war—with a sense of redemptive purpose. (World War II, the most easily justifiable of our wars, was also the least susceptible to this rhetorical strategy.)

The providentialist tradition could be inflected in different idioms, from melodrama to tragedy. The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher demonstrated the melodramatic mode in his oration at the ceremony commemorating the re-taking of Fort Sumter in February 1865, as he imagined the "mighty miscreants" of the Confederacy being "whirled down to perdition" at the Last Judgment. Only a few weeks after Beecher cast the Confederates into Hell, Lincoln demonstrated the power of Providence as tragedy in his second inaugural address, when he characterized the Civil War as a national expiation—common to North and South alike—for the sin of slavery. Providentialist rhetoric could flatten or deepen the language of war; it could foster arrogance in victory but also humility in the face of unimaginable loss.

By ignoring the religious dimensions of the language of war and concentrating on a handful of literary and philosophical texts, Dawes creates a curiously abstract and fragmented version of American culture. And by restricting his range to the emancipatory and disciplinary models of language, he produces an impoverished account of human expression under duress. We learn much about the violent force of language, and much about its

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moral force as well, but very little about its aesthetic force—its capacity to take us, however fleetingly, to a world elsewhere, beyond the realm of morality and violence altogether.

STILL, WITHIN HIS limits, Dawes is often provocative. A pattern emerges, though the reader has to work hard to discern it. Judging by Dawes's examples, the writers whose work we remember—Crane, Hemingway, Heller—tack between the two ways of thinking about language that he has described. They emphasize the gulf between talking and fighting, the honor of silence in response to the unspeakable; and they recognize that language can create alternatives to violence. But they also see that language can itself be a form of coercion, an instrument of violence—especially when it is unsutured from dialogue and even from concrete referents. Propagandistic slogans and bureaucratic directives reduce language to a prisoner of the powerful, but writers are still plotting its escape. In the struggle between words and war, they remain partisans of language.

The appalling and unprecedented casualties of the Civil War posed a serious challenge to Western traditions of describing combat. General William Tecumseh Sherman adopted a successful and characteristically modern method of evasion: quantification. In his *Memoirs*, Dawes writes, Sherman represented the chaos of battle as "a finite collection of clean, containable units of information." A bank manager before the war, Sherman relied on the comforting power of statistics, the modern numerology. He referred to "valuable" men (officers) by name (in his tradition, naming was a mark of dignity rather than oppression), while "those who do not count [enlisted casualties] are simply counted." This approach has served senior officers well through the subsequent century; it is the language of the official report and the authorized biography—the sort of writing that gives claims to objectivity a bad name.

Ulysses S. Grant developed a more refined version of objectivity. The war showed him, he said, "how little men control their own destiny." "Circumstances always did shape my course different from my plans," he remarked in his *Memoirs*, which is characterized by the use of the passive voice and the systematic suppression of the author's self. Through this self-obliteration, Grant achieved the kind of objectivity that is tinged with empathy—his detachment fostered the recognition, for example, that the enemy was as fearful of him as he was fearful of the enemy. "Grant's objectivity," Dawes writes, "demands a self-transcendence that elevates him precisely by treating him as a fallible, potentially expendable object." Habermas could not have asked for a better demonstration of liberal rationality in the public sphere. "This self emptied of subjectivity," Dawes comments, "or rather continually outstripping its subjectivity, becomes the model of what a public man ought to be," one capable (like Grant) of "a personality-erasing thought experiment, in which we view the world from behind a veil of ignorance about ourselves, thereby severing our special connections to 'private' interests." One does not have to be a Freudian to see that such a project is fated to fail. This is a tragic contradiction at the heart of Grant's ideal of objectivity: the impossibility of achieving true self-transcendence, combined with the necessity of continuing to try.

Grant recorded his thought-experiment when he was an old man dying of cancer, who in spite of his pain had managed to achieve a stoical serenity. Younger generations, coming of age in the shadow of the Civil War, had more difficulty cultivating Grant's Olympian perspective on the insignificance of human life (including his own). The philosopher Josiah Royce, perhaps the last Absolute Idealist in America, devoted his career to searching for unified meaning against the backdrop of "a world of brute natural fact" determined by "vain chances" and "caprices"—"a chaos of unintelligible fragments and scattered events." Royce wanted to reduce the confusion of the all to the simplicity of the one, to relieve the misery of our separation from the Absolute (or God) by declaring the universe to be the "unified idea of a single creative will."

To which William James responded, "Damn the Absolute!" James hated meaningless pluralism as much as Royce did, but he resisted Royce's totalizing solution. Yes, life presents us with situations that are fundamentally absurd, situations in which we cannot reconcile our human aspirations with what we know to be philosophically true of the world. But to act effectively in the world we have to make coherence from absurdity. This was the strategy that allowed James to move from skepticism to pragmatism: the notion that belief is a performative act rather than an act of recognition. "Belief, in other words, changes the conditions of existence," Dawes writes, "making real what had previously been neither real nor unreal." It is a cheering thought—but it is a thought easily vaporized in the heat of battle.

Or so one would think. The knowledge of death, after all, constitutes the original source of our sense of the absurd—the realization that all our desperate longings and ambitions are temporary, time-bound, destined for dust. And the Civil War made untimely death a banal and potentially meaningless fact of everyday life. The theater of war was a theater of the absurd, a daily reminder of our own insignificance. Stephen Crane recognized this and explored the terrain retrospectively in (among other writings) his story "An Episode of War." A Union army lieutenant is seriously wounded in his right arm. He wanders about the battlefield in a daze, receives some distracted and incompetent attention from a fellow officer, and eventually encounters a bullying surgeon who at first refuses to amputate and later (offstage) proceeds to do so. When the lieutenant returns home, "his sisters, his mother, his wife, sobbed for a long time at the sight of the flat sleeve. 'Oh well,' he said, shamefaced amid these tears, 'I don't suppose it matters so much as all that.'"

By recognizing his own insignificance, Dawes suggests, the lieutenant has developed the capacity to see himself from outside. This objectivity, like Grant's, can paradoxically produce meaning through ironic distance. A severed arm matters, but amid the piles of corpses at Fredericksburg or Antietam it does not matter all that much. Crane's lieutenant becomes the standard character of modern literature in the ironic mode—the man, as Fussell writes, "whom things are done to." Irony was a weary, chastened version of James's response to absurdity. And irony was the characteristic self-protective move of war novelists through the twentieth century.

FOR AMERICAN MODERNISTS as for their European counterparts, World War I exposed the lies of the language of progress, above all the equation of industrialization and moral advance. Yet even the most disillusioned among them recognized that words preserved a connective dimension as well as a destructive one: as Hemingway and his contemporaries understood, language in wartime could foster care as well as harm—a sense of human significance as well as human insignificance. Alongside the revulsion from the empty rhetoric of public life ("the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain"), there arose the recognition that language could heal the psychic wounds inflicted by war.

W. H. R. Rivers, the British psychiatrist who pioneered the treatment of battlefield trauma, argued that the soldier's experience

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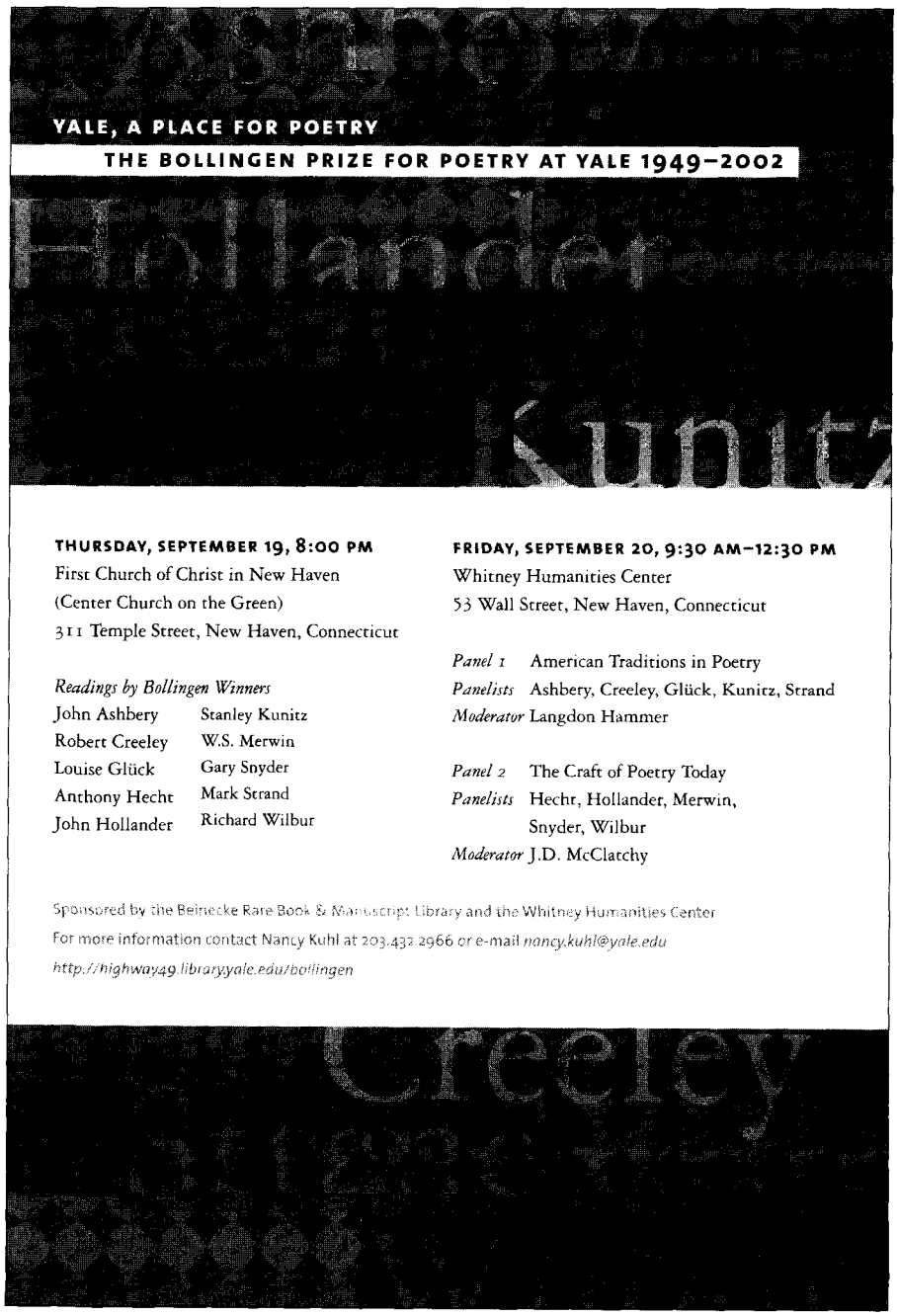
should be talked over in all its bearings. Its good side should be emphasized, for it is characteristic of the painful experience of warfare that it usually has a good, or even noble side, which in his condition of misery the patient does not see at all, or greatly underestimates. By such conversations an emotional experience, which is perhaps tending to become dissociated, may be intellectualized and brought into harmony with the rest of the mental life ... the relief afforded to the patient by the process of talking over his painful experience, and by discussing how he can readjust his life to the new conditions, usually gives immense relief and may be followed by a great improvement, or even by the rapid disappearance of his chief symptoms.

This is the classic case for talk therapy—mentioning the unmentionable, dragging trauma from the murky depths of unconscious memory to the reassuring light of day. Sometimes the valor of silence concealed crippling pain. Rivers found ways to relieve it.

The difficulty, and Rivers knew it, was that in "curing" the victims of shell shock he was returning them to combat, the source of the trauma. It is the dilemma of all therapies that aim at "readjusting" the patient to conditions that promoted "maladjustment" in the first place. And it is part of the larger paradox involved in any attempt to use language as a means of making trauma coherent. In giving voice to suffering, we render it somehow more acceptable. Sometimes we even make it beautiful, as Dawes notes, citing Frederic Henry's description of an Austrian artillery barrage: "Like strange flowers blossoming in the 'wet autumn country,' the explosions are 'soft puffs with a yellow white flash in the center.'" Still, the aestheticizing of violence is at best a holding action. "The material world's pressure against language and memory is implacable," Dawes writes, "like the blood that drips onto Frederic from the soldier helplessly bleeding to death in the stretcher above him." Unlike the theorists who blithely equate language and violence, Dawes has a healthy respect for the intractable actualities of biological existence.

Yet biological experience can have philosophical consequences, which Dawes explores in his discussion of luck. War involves not the survival of the fittest but the survival of the fortunate. The inexplicable vagaries of chance—sparing this one, destroying that one—are pervasive and inescapable. On this point, from the common soldier's point of view, Clausewitz's acumen is undeniable. War is a card game, he wrote, "a meaningless exercise in calculating chance." No wonder men in combat festoon themselves with amulets and ceaselessly perform luck rituals. The sovereignty of luck on the battlefield plays havoc with traditional morality—particularly the Kantian tradition that emphasizes the centrality of moral intentions and the irrelevance of actual consequences. If we act in accordance with universal moral law, says the Kantian, we will have acted morally and thus achieved true freedom, whatever the practical results of our action.

But World War I made it harder to be content with good intentions. Four years of explosions shook the foundations of universal law. When the explosions stopped, John Dewey (among others) decried Kantian metaphysics as a denial of chance. After the war, as Dawes points out, a number of naturalistically inclined philosophers joined Dewey in rejecting Kantian intentionalism in favor of "a consequentialist embrace of contingency." The consequentialist view held that we should obey a moral law even as we realize that there is no philosophical basis for it, provided that obedience will lead to desirable consequences. This was a skeptical, naturalistic version of pragmatism, without James's belief in the creative powers of belief. In the end, even Dewey sensed that this approach underwrote an impoverished, instrumentalist vision—one that


YALE, A PLACE FOR POETRY
THE BOLLINGEN PRIZE FOR POETRY AT YALE 1949–2002
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 8:00 PM
First Church of Christ in New Haven
(Center Church on the Green)
311 Temple Street, New Haven, Connecticut
Readings by Bollingen Winners
John Ashbery
Robert Creeley
Louise Glück
Anthony Hecht
John Hollander
Stanley Kunitz
W.S. Merwin
Gary Snyder
Mark Strand
Richard Wilbur
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 9:30 AM–12:30 PM
Whitney Humanities Center
53 Wall Street, New Haven, Connecticut
Panel 1 American Traditions in Poetry
Panelists Ashbery, Creeley, Glück, Kunitz, Strand
Moderator Langdon Hammer
Panel 2 The Craft of Poetry Today
Panelists Hecht, Hollander, Merwin, Snyder, Wilbur
Moderator J.D. McClatchy
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justified just about any action if it contributed to a desired end.

For Dawes, the alternative to Kantian metaphysics and Deweyan pragmatism is the existentialist vision that Hemingway developed in *A Farewell to Arms*. Frederic Henry is an implicit Kantian: he cultivates moral discipline and plays by the rules. But he leaves himself open to chance by falling in love with Catherine Barkley, a consequentialist who disdains conventional morality and tries to persuade him to desert the army. Frederic is morally unlucky: he deserts, abandoning his conventional moral code, but then Catherine dies in childbirth. Frederic takes a consequentialist view: "It was the wrong thing because something bad happened," he says. Yet in the final scene, when Frederic kisses the dead Catherine and concludes that "it wasn't any good," Dawes finds an affirmation of longings for connection to "the good" in Hemingway. I am not convinced, but I am willing to give Dawes the benefit of the doubt. Maybe Hemingway really does both deny the existence of "the good" and at the same time assert its potentially transcendent reality. In that case, *A Farewell to Arms* can indeed be shelved with the likes of Simone de Beauvoir. "Meaning is never fixed," she wrote, "it must be constantly won."

Floods in Cambridge

The water meadows lay knee-deep,
as if someone had left on the tap.
A tug, or what looked like a tug,
floated level with the common—

the river had finally risen to meet us.
A man rode his bike down a path
that overnight had become canal,
swallowing feet, spokes, knees—

a true admiral, pedaling against the current.
We considered ourselves eighteenth-century,
judging things by what the eye could see,
as if every landscape were a mirror

of the Age of Reason.
Storm light shadowed the housetops,
the steaming, unruly, bulldog chimneys
standing like little Nelsons of defiance.

In every Turner we saw, sunbursts
scumbling the waters,
the evening looked like this,
as if someone had struck a match across it.

William Logan

THE TRAUMA OF world war broke down all sorts of boundaries—not only Kantian traditions of universal moral law, but also the very notion of an independent, separate self. Men who descended daily into a stew of human decay were not likely to preserve exalted notions of individual autonomy. (Pat Barker's recent novel *Regeneration* describes a man, one of Rivers's patients, who fell into a rotting corpse and could not stop smelling or tasting it for months.) Objective standards of truth were not likely to hold up well either. By the 1930s, the fascist rhetoric of reality was making a mockery of the ideal of linguistic transparency. Epistemological categories as well as moral ones were thrown into disarray.

There were two sorts of literary reaction, according to Dawes. One was the modernist assertion of "difficulty" against the false transparency of fascism. Oddly, he cites the work of Maurice Blanchot as an example, when he might have stayed closer to home and mentioned the entire editorial board of *Partisan Review*, men such as Clement Greenberg and Dwight Macdonald, who were constantly celebrating the values of "difficulty" against the philistinism of Right or Left totalitarianism. The other literary reaction was the reassertion of the need for genuine transparency, a return of language to its rightful role as depiction of reality. "Good prose is like a windowpane," George Orwell wrote. Orwell (also unmentioned by Dawes) was probably the most influential and honorable exponent of this philosophically naïve but ethically bracing view. John Hersey, who reported with unflinching candor from Guadalcanal and Hiroshima, was probably its ablest American practitioner.

The desire to revive plain speech was intensified by the bureaucratic denaturing of language under way in the giant military organizations created by World War II. This moment marks in many ways the birthplace of the disciplinary model of language. The blank, impersonal face of modern authority hovers over the traumatic fall into language imagined by contemporary theorists—the fear that being named is akin to being hailed by a policeman. During the 1930s and 1940s, public language was pressed into the service of unprecedented violence. In *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Zygmunt Bauman convincingly shows how the organizational vocabulary of functional rationality diffused any sense of personal moral responsibility among Nazi officials, any sense of engagement with actual human beings. Goebbels's propaganda was similarly divorced from mutuality and referentiality.

Yet the fascists had no monopoly on denatured language. In Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, the American Army Air Corps deploys a language system characterized by the absence of any evidentiary rules. Authority rather than referentiality determines the way events are represented. As a consequence the novel creates a grotesque linguistic atmosphere full of floating signifiers (the name "T. S. Eliot" that characters keep repeating *sotto voce* without any rhyme or reason) and mystified performatives (the meaningless phrase "bomb pattern" that General Peckem thinks will enhance his authority). By exposing such perversions of language, novelists such as Heller and Kurt Vonnegut helped to explain (and implicitly to justify) the silence of the men who came back from the war.

YET THE PARTISANS of language refused to retreat to silence. (Intellectuals will talk; it's what they do.) Hersey, Arendt, Orwell, and others continued to assert the need to give voice to silence (as, indeed, Heller and Vonnegut did in their own way)—to revive objectivity and accuracy in representational language. And the same effort characterized the growing influence of international law in postwar international diplomacy. The formalist tradition that had suffered such a blow with the failure of the League of Nations was exhumed, out of desperation, by nations weary of slaughter. The growth of international law, the spread of a global human rights movement, and the whole attempt to police nations' behavior in accordance with the Geneva Conventions: all of these developments have resonated in the realm of language.

The Geneva Conventions are rooted in the liberal rationalist faith that language can master indiscriminate violence. This notion of objectivity (unlike Grant's) rests on the humanist assumption that individual people matter. Naming, in this tradition, is not a crude power move; it is a foundation of human dignity. "Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name," announces the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, seeking to ensure that states grant personhood to all their citizens. This

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is a far cry from the chic pessimism of Derrida and Butler.

The chief significance of the Conventions, in Dawes's view, is not substance but procedure. The myriad rules magnify the importance of language and multiply the opportunities for dialogue. Against the arbitrariness of power and the confusions of war, the Conventions offer precise definitions, consistent rules, an overlapping vocabulary between belligerents. Emotionally charged propaganda becomes neutral reference, enemies become combatants, vermin become civilians. Behind all this benign language is the easily parodied rationalist assumption that "war devolves into savagery not because savagery is the nature of humans but because war *confuses* us." Violent acts, from this view, are based on category mistakes—such as American commanders conceiving the bombing of civilian neighborhoods in Japan as simply "saving American lives." By overlooking more visceral motives—longings for vengeance and self-preservation intensified by the possibility of racial hatred—the rationalist etherealizes war-making beyond recognition.

THE LAWS OF war are dependent on the assumption that they can be universally applied—that one can always depend, for example, on the ability of war-makers to discriminate between military and civilian targets. Of course it is always possible to dismiss the very idea of "rules of war" as a schoolboyish fantasy of fair play: "This is not a game of cricket," the Japanese Colonel Saito says to the British Colonel Nicholson in *The Bridge Over the River Kwai*, after Nicholson has handed Saito a worn copy of the Geneva Conventions. Yet more sustained objections can also be raised. The Conventions' intent to avoid the murkiness of subjectivity can lead to an abstract universalism that overlooks idiosyncratic situations and context-dependent decisions. International law can unintentionally legitimate war by accepting the rhetoric of "clean, smart bombs" or "appropriate" levels of casualties. Violence, as always, can be legitimated by bland, universalist language.

But that is no reason to throw out universalist language altogether. "Whether or not one finally accepts these moral categories as objectively valid and universal in scope, procedurally grounded in the workings of our autonomy as Kant argued or in the interactive structure of discourse as Habermas argues," Dawes writes, "it is at the very least in our collective self-interest to treat them *as if* they were so." The Conventions must by now be exerting at least a negative pressure, as states go to "torturous lengths" to show they are not in violation.

So we are left with the idea of language as performance—not the melodramatic notion that reduces all language to coercion, but the modest insight that to articulate a principle forcefully is to give it a palpable reality. The language of universal rights, however flawed, is the best alternative we have to unspeakable slaughter. Talking really is better than fighting. Whitman was right, but so was James. The real war will never get into the books, but we have to keep trying to put it there.

THIS IS A humane and sensible conclusion, but it leaves something out. There are more languages of war than are dreamt of in Dawes's philosophical universe. To sense them we need to return from law to literature. In *The Ghost Road*, Pat Barker's protagonist Billy Prior echoes Hemingway's Frederic Henry in asserting that only the names of places have any meaning left: "Mons, Loos, the Somme, Arras, Verdun, Ypres." But then he looks around at the "linked shadows" of himself and his men and remembers "another group of words that still mean something. Little words that rip through sentences unregarded: us, them, we, they, here, there. These are the words of power, and long after we're gone, they'll lie about in the language, like the unexploded grenades in these fields, and any one of them'll take your hand off."

Prior dies in the last week of the Great War, but Barker has one unexploded grenade left. From Rivers's memoirs she fashions a scene of a dying soldier, an idealistic young officer named Hallett.

> The whole left side of his face drooped. The exposed eye was sunk deep in his skull, open, though he didn't seem to be fully conscious. His hair had been shaved off, preparatory to whatever operation had left the horseshoe-shaped scar, now healing ironically well, above the suppurating wound left by the rifle bullet. The hernia cerebri pulsated, looking like some strange submarine form of life, the mouth of a sea anemone perhaps. The whole of the left side of the body was useless. Even when he was conscious enough to speak the drooping of the mouth and the damage to the lower jaw made his speech impossible to follow. This, more than anything else, horrified his family. You saw them straining to understand, but they couldn't grasp a word he said. His voice came in a whisper because he lacked the strength to project it. He seemed to be whispering now.

"Shotvarfet," Hallett seems to say. "Shotvarfet." Finally Rivers realizes what he is saying: "it's not worth it." The cry spreads across the ward. "A buzz of protest not against the cry, but in support of it, a wordless murmur from damaged brains and drooping mouths. '*Shotvarfet. Shotvarfet.*'" The cry goes on and on, until in the end the mangled words fade into silence, and Hallett dies.

This is another language of war, a language closer to ritual incantation than to reasoned discourse—not the sort of language you could use in political debate. Without question there are times when political language is appropriate language, when decent and intelligent people can decide that a particular war is "worth it," particularly when their country is under attack. In recent months, arguments for a "just war" against terrorism have acquired unprecedented cogency, though the nature of that war and the character of that justice remain legitimate subjects for public controversy.

In this uncertain climate, to ponder the actual consequences of organized violence is not to endorse pacifism; it is only to think responsibly and realistically about war. Amid the official language of public policy debate, it may be sometimes worth recalling that darkened ward of broken men and their murmured chant of hopelessness. To ignore that *cri de coeur* would be worse than a category mistake. ■

HUNTINGTON BOOK PRIZE

The students and friends of Samuel P. Huntington have established a prize in the amount of $10,000 for the best book published each year in the field of national security studies. The book can be a work of history or political science, or a work by a practitioner of statecraft. In the event the prize committee judges that in a given year no book meets the high standards set by Samuel P. Huntington, no prize will be awarded. Nominations for books published in the year 2002 will be accepted until January 31, 2003. The winner of the 2002 prize will be announced May 1, 2003. Nominations should be accompanied by two copies of the book, and should be sent to:

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The Arrangements

By JOHN MCWHORTER

The Emperor of Ocean Park by Stephen L. Carter

(Alfred A. Knopf, 672 pp., $26.95)

BUT FOR THE fact that he has written a novel, Stephen L. Carter is not a novelist. He is a professor of law at Yale who made his debut in 1991 with a lively and candid book called *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, a sober exploration of affirmative action and its effect on his life. He could have ridden this book to talking-head fame as a professional contrarian in the media; but he is a restrained man, and he has resisted the temptation to become an "alternative black voice" on Fox News or in *The Wall Street Journal*. Instead he followed up with six treatises on the nature of our public discourse. Their tone is reflected by the title of one of them, *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy*, which appeared in 1998. He has also argued for the legitimacy of religious faith in intellectual argument and in public policy, in *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (1993). These are, among other things, books by a black author that do not focus on race, which makes them very rare and valuable indeed.

But here is this huge novel, and it does focus on race, and it is, of all things, a thriller. *The Emperor of Ocean Park* is a thoroughly competent effort, though I wish I could say that I couldn't put it down. I cannot see in it the masterpiece that others have seen. But this is actually good news. In ways even beyond those woven into Carter's tale, the book is a sign of integration on the march in spite of itself. If it is not an important artistic achievement, *The Emperor of Ocean Park* is certainly an important social document.

As the novel opens, Judge Oliver Garland of the D.C. Circuit United States Court of Appeals, a notorious black conservative, has died of a heart attack at his desk. Among those at the funeral are his three children, including his son Talcott, the book's protagonist, who is a law professor at a prestigious northeastern university. Judge Garland was a cold martinet of a man, greeting his children's sorrows and tribulations with stern lectures on moral fiber. He elicited more respect than affection. After his funeral, his children expect to shuttle back efficiently to their busy lives as scions of the black bourgeois elite, but Talcott is approached by the sinister, wraith-like Jack Ziegler, an operator of vast power and vaster governmental connections, nearing the end of an infamous life spent escaping conviction for assorted high-profile crimes. Ziegler was a friend of the Judge's and he is godfather to his children, and he reports that the Judge had promised him that Talcott would hand over to him certain "arrangements" after the Judge's death. But Talcott has no idea what these "arrangements" are. Ziegler is livid. He departs with the assumption that Talcott will eventually come through, ominously assuring him that he will make sure that no harm comes to him or his family in the meantime.

Clearly all was not well in the Judge's life. A daughter was killed in a hit-and-run accident years ago, and the police were of little help in seeking the culprit. This sent the usually abstemious Judge into a spell of heavy drinking and seclusion. The Judge later achieved his lifelong dream of being nominated for the Supreme Court (by the Reagan administration: Carter weaves many actual events into his story). But Oliver Garland joined Robert Bork and Douglas Ginsburg in the line of thwarted Supreme Court nominees when it was proven that he had some late-night meetings with the unsavory Ziegler at his office years ago, despite his having denied this in former questioning. This sinks Garland into national disgrace, driving him to further drinking and obsessive resentment of the "white liberals" who did him in.

It is not long before certain documents disappear from the Judge's study, and two pawns are stolen from his chess set, and the preacher who presided at the Judge's funeral is brutally murdered. None of the family and friends whom Talcott questions about the Judge's past yield anything but the vaguest of hints as to what these and similar events might mean. Then Talcott finds the family's summer house on Martha's Vineyard ransacked, with a curious note left behind in his father's hand with cryptic references to "Angela's boyfriend" being the only one who knows what "the arrangements" are. "Excelsior, my son!" the note ends. "Excelsior! It begins!"

IT IS TALCOTT'S solitary and frustrating unraveling of the meaning of this note that centers Carter's novel, which is by turns a tale of suspense and a black family saga. Talcott's efforts are complicated when his wife, an ambitious lawyer, is nominated for a federal judgeship in competition with one of his faculty colleagues, while assorted shadowy figures emerge with an equally intense interest in "the arrangements." They take to following him everywhere he goes. Some appear to fall outside the sphere of Ziegler's protective edict, and the doughy suburbanite Talcott winds up getting a taste of scaling scaffolds, jumping out of taxis, taking punches, and fighting for his life in a cemetery in the dark of night. Another pursuer is a comely black woman, one of the book's tastier characters. She is certainly more interesting than one more laconic male in a windbreaker.

Carter stirs enough elements into the mix that the narrative never exactly flags. The last one hundred pages step up the pace a bit. The dean of the law school gives Talcott two weeks to solve the mystery on pain of being fired for embarrassing Yale (excuse me, "the university") with his escapades. Eventually Talcott becomes a man who gains control of his own fate instead of only being acted upon; and this enriches the thriller plot with a story of a character's spiritual development, so that the novel does not conclude only with the mechanical resolution of the mystery. But finally the thriller and the family story never quite mesh. Of course, the fact that we encounter wealthy blacks so seldom in fiction renders the book a rather ceremonious occasion, and as such I found it ticklish to see the Garlands and their circle pasted into the paint-by-numbers routines of a thriller, often at the cost of human plausibility.

Consider Talcott's meeting with his doctor cousin Lanie, a woman *d'un certain âge* who belonged to one of the last layers of the pre–civil rights black bourgeoisie chronicled by Lawrence Otis Graham in *Our Kind of People* (1999). Carter spends a couple of pages nicely limning the fragile equipoise that these people maintained as the elite layer of a group dismissed by the wealthy whites they studiously imitated. But then he immediately plunks her into his hackneyed mystery story. Talcott is in Washington, D.C. at a conference and

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takes her to lunch, but before she has talked herself out she has to get back to the office. Talcott ends up squeezing a few last crumbs of information out of her—but why couldn't he just meet her after work? She is family, after all. And surely she has a phone.

Carter is certainly aware of the dangers of this juxtaposition of poignant reality with Tom Clancy schematics, and his main linking strategy is a chess metaphor that he pulls off beautifully. The Judge was a chess player and he passed his obsession on to Talcott; and without giving away the plot, suffice it to say that the intricacies of chess technique are expertly interwoven into the text and are crucial to the resolution of the mystery. Even the black-white metaphor is freshly handled. And yet nothing wonderful comes of this. The book is still *Our Kind of People* meets *Clear and Present Danger*. And the crowd-pleasing machinations overwhelm social and psychological substance.

I WISH CARTER had honored the drama more than the melodrama. It would have been even a public service of a sort to have written more about Judge Garland's confirmation hearing, which is told only piecemeal and in flashback. In the hands of most black writers, such a story would end up as a plangent updating of the black mulatto genre: wealthy blacks who are "yet a stranger" (as the title of Deborah Mathis's new victimology primer puts it) at white cocktail parties, haunted by a fear that not being poor renders them "inauthentic" as black people. The nice thing about Carter's version of the tale is the absence from it of all the usual lachrymosity. This is an African American saga that is not premised on African American self-pity.

Talcott's wife Kimberly, proudly sporting her prep-school name Kimmer, is too busy climbing the legal ranks to be bothered with feeling guilty about being self-realized and successful, and Carter gives not a hint that this sort of guilt would spill out of her after a few drinks. His characters believe in the possibility of a well-adjusted and optimistic black life. Talcott's sister Mariah is married to a rich white man, and she is somewhat bored and lonely staying home and raising a brood of children; but Carter portrays this as a human issue, as a woman's issue, but not as a racial issue. His people are "just" human—something successful blacks are rarely allowed to be in African American fiction. Even in the work of a novelist as fine as Gloria Naylor, there runs a chariness of wealthy blacks as "misbegotten." In *Linden Hills*, Naylor has the General Motors executive Maxwell Smyth find in college that "his blackness began to disappear behind his straight A average, and his reputation for never sweating or getting cold." His personal life is arid: "the black women he wanted to date found him strange and the white women strangely comforting," and "he found the erratic rhythms and temperatures that normally accompany sex a problem, so he rarely slept with a woman. He didn't consider it a great deprivation because before he was even thirty, an erection had become almost as difficult to achieve as an orgasm." Smyth is so perverted by a desire to prove himself worthy to whites that he observes an obsessive diet that divests his feces of any smell.

There are no such admonitions in Carter's novel. And neither does he err in the other direction, by depicting an idealized clan of shining archetypes of black nobility. The Garlands are a distinctly joyless family. The Judge was self-involved to the point of staying out on the road doing speaking engagements while his wife lay dying. The reader's initial impulse to suppose that he was a saintly figure in his public life also turns out to be mistaken. Relations with the extended family are decent but cool—there are no warm, hip, perfect grandparents à la *The Cosby Show* to keep everybody sane with their ancient racial wisdom. Carter depicts Talcott as Christian, but he does not press the point, and the church hovers at the margins of the novel; there are no joyous redemptions to the rock of Baptist church singing, and no poor souls healing themselves through the agency of the Almighty. Nor is there an all-knowing, saintly maternal figure: the Judge's wife is dead when the novel begins, and anyway this old-style garden-party matron does not appear to have made much of an impression upon anyone.

SO THE GARLANDS are refreshingly joyless. There is a tendency to depict black families as awash in a moist, unreflective, almost primitive brand of affection. (This was lampooned especially well by George C. Wolfe in the sketch in *The Colored Museum* mocking the "Mama-on-the-Couch Play.") This canonical sentimentality is owed in part to the experience of slavery: if society thinks of you as chattel, then certainly blood relations will take up the slack. Oppressed groups with loose family ties are exceedingly rare. And it is owed also to the black church tradition. Black Americans are among the most fervently Christian people in the United States by a wide margin, regardless of class or educational level. It is not an accident that the film of Terry McMillan's *Waiting to Exhale* includes a loving transition shot of the four middle-class protagonists happily walking out of church one Sunday. This seems unremarkable until we imagine a similar shot in a typical white movie: we can scarcely imagine characters played, say, by Julia Roberts, Meg Ryan, or Sandra Bullock going anywhere near a church, except to get married.

These strains of primal mother love and unreconstructed piety were united by Lorraine Hansberry in *A Raisin in the Sun*, when the archetypal matriarch Lena Younger slaps her daughter Beneatha for denying the existence of God and demands that she recite, "In my mother's house there is still God." Beneatha dutifully submits to maternal authority under the family roof, and the exchange rings true for almost anyone who has grown up in a black household. (In rehearsals for the original production, Claudia McNeil felt the power of the scene so deeply that she slapped poor Diana Sands hard enough to require restraint by an outside party.) This was fine for 1959, but there is none of it, mercifully, in *The Emperor of Ocean Park*. I do not mean to disparage the value of familial love or religious belief; but in the

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post-civil rights America in which we live, there are times when the Cult of the Mother in black American entertainment smacks of the Cult of the Noble Savage. And so I liked that the Garlands in Carter's novel are more *Ordinary People* than *Meet Me in St. Louis*. The book places black characters in a new and more general module of humanity in which they are not often depicted, and this must be counted as progress. If only the characters themselves were not on the flat side.

STRICTLY SPEAKING, CARTER'S novel is not about the wealthy black world that Graham depicts in *Our Kind of People*. Talcott's parents were part of that world, but we are given it only in occasional flashbacks; and though this world still exists to an extent, Talcott, his siblings, and their spouses and paramours inhabit it at the fringes at best. Observing one of their gatherings at the conference hotel, Talcott grouses about the old college test: "*If your skin is any darker than this paper bag, you can't join our sorority*. Oh, but we are sick people! A buried sentiment catches me by surprise, welling up from some putrefying source deep inside of me, a wave of cold, brutal hatred for my parents' way of life, for their exclusive little circle and its usually cruel snap judgments about everybody on the outside." So much for *Our Kind of People*.

But then Talcott also knows that this was not the whole story, later admitting that "the social scene, so inexplicably wasteful and pretentious to its critics, refreshed and reinforced those who whirled through it, strengthening them to face another day, another week, another month, another year of expending their prodigious talents in a nation unprepared to reward them for their abilities." Obviously there is drama here, of the sort that could be mined rewardingly by a gifted novelist. But Carter steers clear of these complexities: customs such as the Jack and Jill clubs where well-off black children got to know one another and made lifelong connections or exclusive black clubs such as the Boulé are mentioned only in passing.

Instead, Carter's characters are almost whitewashed. The absence of the tropes of down-home "negritude" is certainly a strength of this book; but there is a danger in the other extreme. If I may briefly indulge in a bit of "Soul Patrol": Talcott and his wife's fiction collection is described as including John Updike, E. L. Doctorow, Jane Smiley, and Scott Turow, with Toni Morrison the only black author on the list (she is also later dropped in as a favorite of Mariah's). Kimmer's favorite movie is *Casablanca*. *Citizen Kane* comes to Talcott's mind as readily as *Shaft* or *Do the Right Thing* would for most black characters. The problem is that if "blackness" is this marginal to these characters' everyday lives, then what remains is just affluent people driving around in BMWs and watching *Casablanca* who happen to have dark skin. But are there really many people likely to read this book who will be shocked (*shocked!*) that there are more than a few black people who make a lot of money, drive nice cars, and even have—brace yourself—summer houses? In 2002, a black character does not acquire humanity by having a walk-in closet.

The problem of wanness holds also for the characters' politics. Talcott's views on these issues are too ceaselessly moderate to liven him up as a figure. Here are his thoughts on welfare as he does community work in a soup kitchen:

> This is what conservatives have spawned with their welfare cuts and their indifference to the plight of those not like themselves, say my colleagues at the university. This is what liberals have spawned with their fostering of the victim mentality and their indifference to the traditional values of hard work and family, my father used to tell his cheering audiences. In my sour moments, it strikes me that both sides seem much more interested in winning the argument than in alleviating these women's suffering.

This is good, and true, and a fine editorial. But it is so middle-of-the-road that it becomes a wise footnote rather than something that would allow us to engage with Talcott in any profound way. Is success really the death of edge?

Similarly, Talcott is skeptical of campus identity politics, and thinks blacks should stop trusting white liberals; and then he is just as skeptical of his late father's stardom on the white conservative circuit espousing right-wing messages. Again he seeks the sensible center. But this is a novel, not a Century Fund study; and the absence of strong feeling from it is crippling. Come on, Professor Carter—I mean, Professor Garland: what do you really think we should do? How do you really feel? People must have passions—at least if they are to affect us in novels. In this regard, Stephen Carter is the very antithesis of Walter Mosley, whose thrillers overflow with intensities of experience. Mosley, of course, has a bleaker and angrier view of black life than Carter. Against Mosley I would insist that political radicalism is not the condition of black art—but at least Mosley's characters regularly grouse, seethe, and even erupt.

In sum, Talcott Garland is just rather dull. He neither hates nor loves his job. He does not seem to inspire any particular following among students; there is not a hint of warmth between him and the one person depicted as his former protégé. He is constantly pointing out that he is less physically fit, less interesting, even less brilliant than those around him. In the romantic realm as well he is mashed potatoes. Kimmer has obviously fallen out of love with him. She has always said she was in eternal need of novelty, and she dumped him more than once for other "more interesting" men while they were dating in law school. Throughout the novel no sane person could doubt that she is being unfaithful to her husband. Yet Talcott loves her devotedly and wants to stay with her at the very least for the sake of their child. The marriage is fraying for more than six hundred fifty pages, and yet never does he even consider standing up for himself. He maintains an almost pre-modern wariness of being seen alone with a woman other than his wife, even when the woman is a lesbian colleague. Talcott often recalls times when they were "torridly" in love, snuggling in front of fireplaces and retiring many nights directly after dinner for, well, you know (Carter is very discreet about sex); but the character whom Carter gives us is unimaginable in scenes such as this. (He does have one savory touch, though: Talcott's physical attraction goes not to the willowy light-skinned women who have such a premium in high black bourgeois society, but to dark-skinned women on the zaftig side.)

Carter's dialogue distances the reader still further from his people. He seems reluctant to let his characters just talk. Roughly every second line of any conversation is interrupted by Talcott's impressions of what his interlocutor said, how he or she said it, and what the hidden meanings might be. Talcott spent some time studying semiotics, and so this endless commentary technically follows from the character, and sometimes it issues in smart writing. Here Talcott is talking to a Supreme Court justice who was close friends with his father:

> "Your father would no more have sold his vote on a case than … than"—a pause while he searches for just the right simile, then a mischievous grin to tell me he has found it—"why, than I would," he finishes with a self-deprecating smile, realizing, perhaps, that he has played perfectly into his own image as moderately egomaniacal.

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> I am almost done. One last bit of confusion to clear up. "So, if my father was a man of such integrity and such intelligence"—I hesitate here: did Wainwright actually say at any point that my father was smart? I cannot recall, and, when white intellectuals speak of black ones, the question is of no small importance—"if he was so honest and so smart, then why did he bring Jack Ziegler into the courthouse?"

Here the internal musings are shrewd and poignant and useful, and they plainly reflect the concerns that Carter explored in *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*. But Carter almost never allows characters to come right out and speak to one another, even in moments of high passion. Even the arguments between Talcott and Kimmer are largely recounted retrospectively.

Carter wraps up the main meal with a "Scooby Doo" ending. Suffice it to say that a certain personage ends up spending a counter-intuitively long time explicating their motives during a tense moment, peeved that they could have gotten away with it if "it wasn't for you nosy kid." This is, alas, the rare book that will almost certainly be improved upon by the movie. The cinematic medium will not tolerate Talcott's tacked-on political musings, and good actors can suggest years of a character's experience in two or three lines.

It is certainly a great day when a book by a black author is splashed all over the big bookstores with the assumption that people of all races will buy it; but still I insist that people such as the Garlands deserve better and richer portraiture. Carter's characters escape the stereotypes, but too often they surrender human intensity in the process. But then few complain that Tom Clancy's characters are less "round" than Tolstoy's. *The Emperor of Ocean Park* is, in its way, a sign of progress in its weaknesses. When rich black people are wound up and set loose in a banal thriller just like white ones, true equality is that much closer. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 5

increase pollution. But utilities understand that increasing emissions is exactly what the rule changes are designed to do, by allowing them to replace aging components of power plants with brand-new parts without modern pollution controls *even if emissions increase by thousands of tons per year*. The Justice Department and Spitzer allege that's just what companies have done, and defendants afraid to take their chances in court are working to change the rules in their favor.

Easterbrook repeats without examination the industry charge that new source review (NSR) has kept companies from building new power plants. Really? The Department of Energy reports that 2001 set a new record for power-industry growth, and we now have so much capacity that new plants are being mothballed. But most of that growth is fueled by natural gas, and the politically sheltered coal industry is concerned about losing market share if it is forced to control pollution as the law requires.

Easterbrook is right to say we ought not to ignore real environmental gains, but some of the statistics he cites are out of context. For example, ozone levels in many cities outside California (which has the tough laws Easterbrook derides) have increased over the last decade. The "nonpartisan" Pacific Research Institute (PRI) he cites to support his view touts "a free market economy, limited government, and private initiative"; promotes coal; debunks global warming and everything said by Al Gore; and relentlessly defends Bush's environmental record. If that's nonpartisan, so is Greenpeace.

Easterbrook has gotten too comfortable assuming that things will get better no matter what we do. Big environmental problems do not get worked out in think-tank cocoons; they are more often the product of bare-knuckled political brawls. Yes, the EPA tried to make regulations more flexible under the Bill Clinton administration, but that didn't stop every smokestack trade association in Washington from taking the EPA to court over Clean Air Act rules, raising arguments so outlandish they were tossed out by a unanimous Supreme Court. Expanding loopholes for old coal-fired power plants is just the latest round in a three-decade fight with industry lobbyists determined to block the kind of progress Easterbrook takes for granted.

ERIC SCHAEFFER
Director
Environmental Integrity Project
Rockefeller Family Fund
Washington, D.C.

GREGG EASTERBROOK REPLIES:
Eric Schaeffer claims I botched "many important facts," yet he can't even describe my article accurately. He says I "repeat[ed] without examination the industry charge that new source review (NSR) has kept companies from building new power plants." My article contained no such statement; NSR could not possibly prevent new construction since, despite its confusing name, the rule applies only to facilities that existed before 1977. What I wrote was that the regulation has kept power companies from *replacing old power plants* with new ones, as the rule creates a perverse incentive to keep dirty, pre-1977 facilities in operation. This is a distinction that someone who styles himself as a specialist on this issue surely ought to understand.

Next Schaeffer says that 20 percent of national sulfur emissions are at stake in the controversy, but the figure in the EPA's hearing record on this issue is 15 percent. Fifteen percent is still plenty important, but it lacks the end-of-the-world feeling that alarmists such as Schaeffer want to attach to this issue. On health effects, Schaeffer presents a highly speculative number. His "5,800 premature deaths" statistic probably comes from a document known as the Abt Associates study; assumptions and data in this study have been widely criticized by specialists. There is indeed strong scientific evidence that power-plant emissions harm public health, but the real toll—currently being researched by the nonpartisan Health Effects Institute—is likely to be smaller than Schaeffer suggests.

Regarding the term "nonpartisan," Schaeffer objects to my using it to describe PRI. His own caricature of PRI seems to me cartoonish. And although he complains that my article had a favorable adjective for the center-right PRI, he does not complain that the same article called the center-left Clean Air Task Force "respected." At any rate, the sole PRI work I cited was its annual Index of Leading Environmental Indicators, which is strictly an analysis of nonpartisan EPA statistics.

Finally Schaeffer says that, while smog overall is declining, in "many cities" it is not. Well, this depends on what "many" means. Smog has increased recently in Atlanta, in parts of Texas, and in a few other places with rapid population growth; mostly it's declining. The rate of smog decline has stalled nationally in the last few years due to the mania for SUVs, which are, scandalously, allowed by federal law to emit more pollutants than are regular cars—in addition to being held to much more lenient fuel-efficiency standards. Standards for SUVs must be raised, as both I and TNR's editors have repeatedly written. But this has nothing to do with the regulation of power plants, which was the subject of my article. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The Fall

I HAVE BEEN READING COLLECtions of writings about September 11, and they are wearying: so many bruises so feebly expressed, so many people searching for a poem to protect them. Dickinson #341, perhaps? Literariness is a kind of sedative, I suppose, and in this way it differs from literature. There are circumstances, of course, in which unoriginality of feeling or form is not a shortcoming, in which the really advanced statement is the modest expression of a common sentiment, in which banality is a guarantee of decency. In a huge volume called *September 11, 2001: American Writers Respond*, I encounter a letter by Richard Wilbur written a few months after the catastrophe to the book's editor, declining the invitation to art:

> Dear Bill,
> The only thing I can say right now is this. There is no excuse for the cold inhumanity of 11 September, and there is no excuse for those Americans, whether of the left or the religious right, who say that we had it coming to us.
> Dick

The poet's disinclination to make a poem is affecting. It is the truest thing in the book. But elsewhere in this book, and in the other books, there is only banality in the bad sense, and remaindered habits of dissent, and the occasional hilarity, as in the observation by Avital Ronell that when George W. Bush remarked that we were tested on September 11, he "reverted to a citation of pretechnological syntagms that capture the auratic pull of the test." Surely the syntagms were his staff's. But now it is the anniversary, and it is Elul, and I must be forgiving. I am prepared even to agree with Stanley Fish that postmodernism did not destroy the World Trade Center.

BUT AS I LEAF THROUGH *A NATION Challenged*, the "visual history" of the catastrophe that has been produced by *The New York Times*, I gasp at the sight of the picture that frightened me almost out of my mind when I saw it in the paper a year ago. Here it is again, the size of a page, and in color. It is the photograph, taken by Richard Drew of the Associated Press, of the man falling to his death from the north tower. His head faces the earth, his feet face the sky, but there is no earth in the picture and no sky, there is only the striped geometry of the "exoskeleton" of the building in the background, still intact in its spurious attitude of invincibility. The lines of the façade look like ladders without rungs. The tower is half in shadow, half in light, and the man is dropping between the shadow and the light. There is no sign of his velocity. His physical integrity is extraordinary. He is standing in the world but the world is upside-down. He does not appear to be wounded. He seems composed, a stoic in the air, except for the tails of his white shirt, which hang from his trousers like snapped wings. His hands are smartly at his side, his legs look as if they are marching. It is almost possible to make out his face. It is an African American face, a full, tender face. I do not see panic on the man's countenance. I see thought. I shudder that he may have been thinking. I do not impute philosophy to his face, only mindfulness. I suspect that his eyes are open. His direction is clear.

IN OUR SOULS, WE ARE VERTICAL; OR so we have been taught to think since the beginnings of spiritual speculation in the West. "The way of life is upward to the wise," Proverbs advises. Heaven is above, hell is below. We seek the top, we fear the bottom. When we are worthy, we ascend; when we are unworthy, we descend. The good will rise, the evil will fall. We look up to our betters and our rulers, they look down on us. The "ladder of ascension" is a central myth of salvation in Judaism, in Christianity, and in Islam. (God is "stably and permanently at the top of the ladder," Maimonides instructed.) And in the later inversions of the traditional teachings, in the almost irresistible doctrines of redemption through sin, according to which the depths are as spiritually attractive as the heights, the dream is still a vertical one. I have often worried that the grip of this directionality upon our souls is owed simply to the fact of our physical bearing. We aspire to paradise in the manner of upright beings. Levinas thought otherwise. "Height introduces a sense into being," he wrote. "It is already lived across the experience of the human body. It leads human societies to raise up altars. It is not because men, through their bodies, have an experience of the vertical that the human is placed under the sign of height; because being is ordained for height the human body is placed in a space in which the high and the low are distinguished and the sky is discovered." And we not only dream high, we also build high. The vertical conception of human greatness is nowhere more apparent than in architecture. Was there ever a structure so "ordained for height" as the World Trade Center? These buildings were extravagantly consecrated to the proposition that glory is celestial. Visitors to Windows on the World used to marvel about its God-like view of the city. A philosopher who visited the World Trade Center in the 1980s remarked upon "this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more." To escape one's finitude, one had only to take the elevator to the 110th floor.

THESE ASSOCIATIONS I use to defend myself against this picture of this man who did not escape his finitude. I look at what an AP photographer brought back from the inferno—the actual one, not the one peddled by clerics—and I see an emblem of what used to be called soteriology. Too many books, I guess; but this is a way of insisting upon the scope of the horror in New York a year ago. It is also a way of turning back some of these spatial superstitions. For there is something inhumane about this metaphor of the summit. The heights can be fatal, and the exhilaration can be cruel, and this man falling from the tower is falling for no reason except the evil in the hearts of other men, and wisdom is not in the clouds, and God is not in the sky. Surely our minds can develop a view of the world that is not merely a corollary of our bodies. I would rather be ordained for truth than ordained for height.

THE REMARKABLE THING ABOUT THE falling man is that he is not looking down. He is looking straight ahead. And as I say, he is in the stance of a man who is marching. There is, in other words, a strangely horizontal quality to him, which may account for his terrifying dignity. He seems to be fighting his vertical doom with his horizontal dignity. What matters to his gaze is not what is above, but what is ahead. Turn this picture of the upside-down world upside-down, and he appears even to have a sensation of purpose. He is not on a ladder, he is on a track. Regarded in this way, he looks like nothing so much as a soldier. Regarded in this way, his testament is plain.

LEON WIESELTIER

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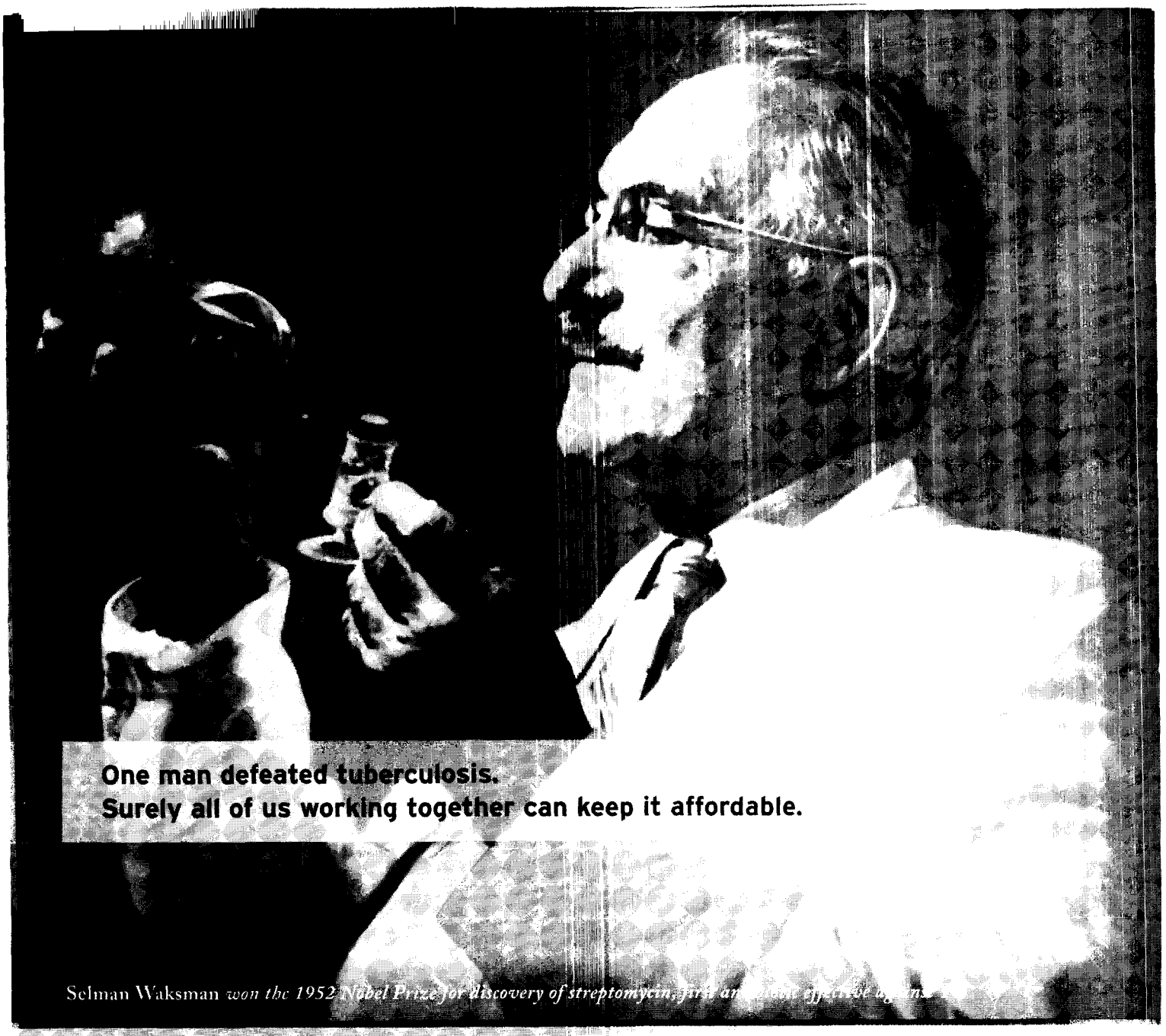
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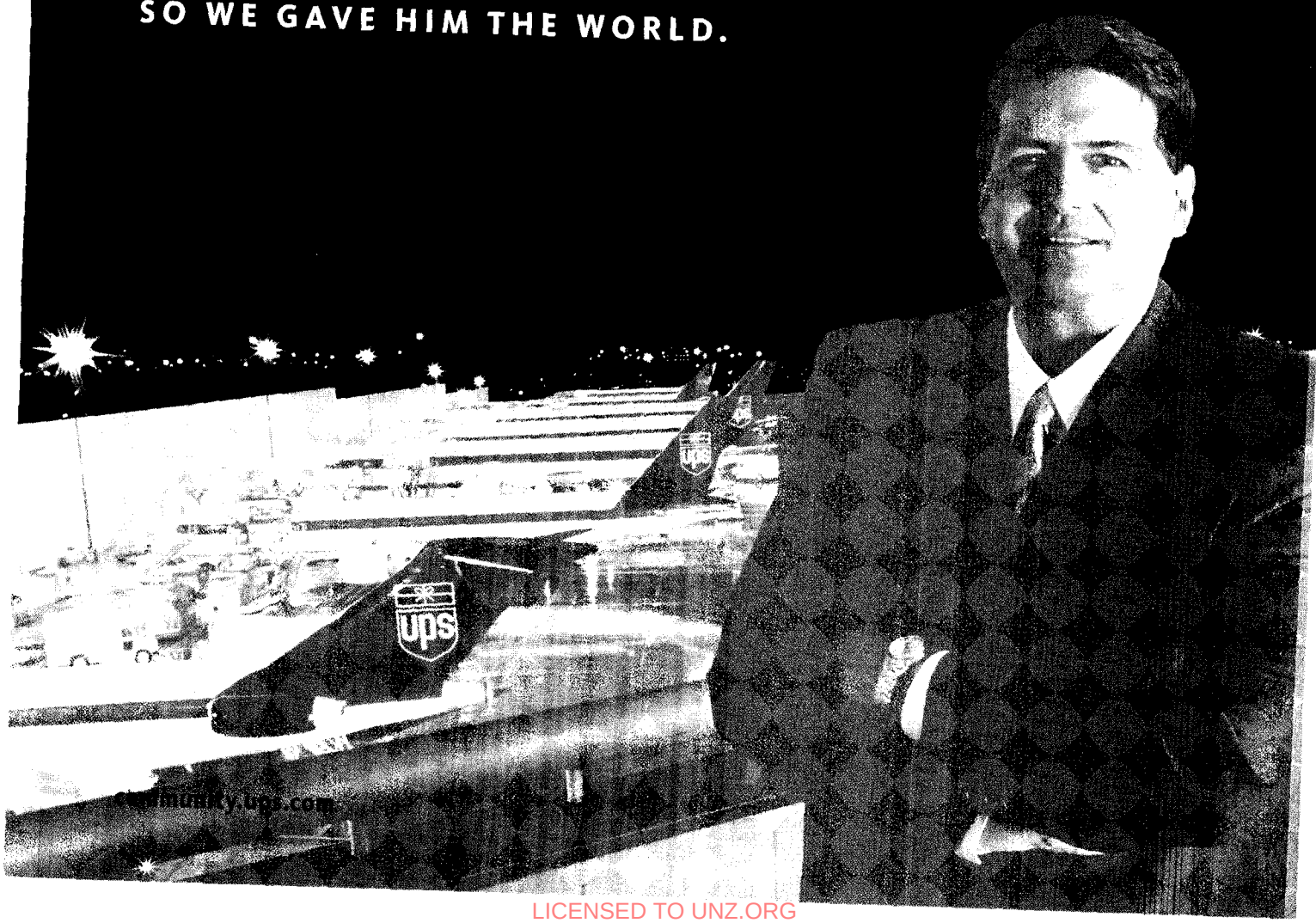

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